SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION TO SUPPORT
RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

MiPAAF

Food and
Agriculture
Organization
of the
United Nations

Italian Ministry
of Agriculture
Food and
Forestry
Policies

AdriaMed

GCP/RER/010/ITA

Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee

Postira, Croatia, 18-19 March 2013

AdriaMed Technical Documents No. 31
GCP/RER/010/ITA/TD-31

Rome (Italy), April 2013

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Preface

The Regional Project "Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea" (AdriaMed) 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) and since 2007 from the Directorate General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs of the European Commission.

AdriaMed was conceived to contribute to the promotion of cooperative fishery management between the participating countries (Republics of Albania, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia), in line with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries adopted by the UN-FAO.

Particular attention is given to encouraging and sustaining a smooth process of international collaboration between the Adriatic Sea coastal countries in fishery management, planning and implementation. Consideration is also given to strengthening technical coordination between the national fishery research institutes and administrations, the fishery organizations and the other relevant stakeholders of the Adriatic countries.

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GCP/RER/010/ITA Publications

The AdriaMed Project publications are issued as a series of Technical Documents (GCP/RER/010/ITA/TD-00) and Occasional Papers (GCP/RER/010/ITA/OP-00) and Scientific Reports (GCP/RER/010/ITA/SR-00) related to meetings and research organized by or conducted within the framework of the Project.

Occasionally, relevant documents may be translated into national languages as AdriaMed Translations (GCP/RER/010/ITA/AT-00).

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

For bibliographic purposes this document
should be cited as follows:

AdriaMed. 2013. Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee. GCP/RER/010/ITA/TD31. *AdriaMed Technical Documents, 31:* 72 pp.

Preparation of this document

This document is the final version of the Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee, organised by the FAO-AdriaMed Project (*Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea)* in Postira, Croatia, 18-19 March 2013.

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia, which through Mr Ljubomir Kučić Kristo, provided kind hospitality and assistance in the organization of the Meeting, is gratefully acknowledged.

AdriaMed.
Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee. Postira, Croatia, 18-19 March 2013.
AdriaMed Technical Documents. No.31. GCP/RER/010/ITA/TD-31, Rome, 2013: 72 pp.

ABSTRACT

The Fourteenth Meeting of the Coordination Committee of the FAO AdriaMed Regional Project "Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea" was held in Postira, Croatia, 18-19 March 2013. It was attended by representatives of the Project's participating countries (Albania, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, and Slovenia) and other interested parties. The meeting sought to present and discuss the results of the activities carried out by the Project referring to the 2012.

The activities followed the methodological approach used by the Project and were presented according to the main components. Attention was drawn to the preparation of the multi-annual management plans for the Adriatic Sea and specifically to the proposal for management plan for small pelagic. The working paper "Project Future Implementation", in which objectives, outputs and activities proposed for 2013 was introduced and agreed by the Committee including additional inputs coming out from the discussion.

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Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee
Postira, Croatia, 18-19 March 2013

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

1. The Fourteenth Coordination Committee Meeting of the FAO Regional Project AdriaMed "Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea" was held in Postira, Croatia, 18th – 19th March 2013, kindly hosted by the Fishery Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia.

2. The meeting was attended by a representative of the Donor, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF), representatives from the countries participating in the Project (Albania, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia), representatives of other FAO Regional Projects (namely MedSudMed, CopeMed II and EastMed), a representative of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO GFCM) Secretariat, FAO Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (FAO-REU), FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FAO-FIRF) as well as the staff of the FAO AdriaMed Project (Annex A list of participants).

3. The FAO AdriaMed Project Coordinator, Mr Enrico Arneri, took the floor and thanked the Croatian authorities for hosting the meeting. He welcomed the participants to the Island of Brač. He informed the Meeting that a set of documents prepared by the Project staff had been distributed to the participants both in paper and electronic version in a USB pen drive.

4. Mr Ljubomir Kučić, Assistant to the Minister for Fishery, Republic of Croatia, acted as Chair for this session of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee.

5. Mr Kučić welcomed the participants and thanked AdriaMed for its role and support in the development of cooperation and of joint activities on fisheries research. He recalled the long history of bilateral cooperation in the Adriatic that has been lasting for more than 40 years thanks to the efforts done by research institutes. In the last years, also thanks to AdriaMed, the cooperation in the sub-region further evolved. It now involves research institutions and fisheries administrations from all the countries and can be considered an unique example in the Mediterranean. The meeting was wished every success and in particular that the results of this Coordination Committee meeting would entail the continuation of AdriaMed activities.

6. The representative of Albania thanked the Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia for hosting the meeting and the AdriaMed Project for the support given to the countries as it provided a chance for cooperation with other institutions in the Adriatic area, as well as the opportunity to participate in and carry out important scientific activities at international level.

7. The representative from Montenegro acknowledged the efforts made by the Project in the Adriatic, in terms of cooperation, and in Montenegro, for specific activities. He pointed out that thanks to AdriaMed support monitoring activities for fisheries and marine resources were initiated and capacities were developed in the country. Looking at the future, he expressed the wish that the Project activities continue and further evolve by giving more and more support to the discussion on fisheries management.

8. The representative from Slovenia greeted the meeting and, at the same time, further highlighted the importance of the AdriaMed Project in supporting joint and cooperative activities related to the fisheries. He reiterated that the trustful environment established by the Project in the Adriatic region is the appropriate forum for initiating and develop discussion on, *inter alia*, fisheries management related problems.

9. The representative of Italy thanked the Croatian authorities for the organization of the meeting and recalled the importance of the AdriaMed Project in the Mediterranean region.

Adoption of the Agenda (Agenda item n. 2)

10. The Agenda was presented to the Coordination Committee. The Chair invited the participants to offer any comments. The Agenda was adopted with no changes (Annex B).

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

11. The Project Fishery Information Officer, Ms Nicoletta Milone, introduced this agenda item and the document "Report of the Intersessional Activities of the Project" in which the main activities carried out by AdriaMed from March 2012 to February 2013 are described. These include workshops, training, research activities as well as the technical assistance given to the countries and the cooperation of the Project with the GFCM, the SAC and its Sub-Committees and other relevant institutions. The activities carried out correspond to the work programme endorsed by the 13th Coordination Committee Meeting, and they include as well the conclusions and recommendations of the FAO independent evaluation carried out in 2012.

12. It was further underlined to the Committee that the activities carried out during the inter-sessional period were also the results of the strong collaboration of all the national research institutions involved in the AdriaMed Project activities which represent the scientific institutions network of the Project. The attention of the participants was brought to two events that have strongly characterized the intersessional period and will have a role in the Project activities: the FAO Independent evaluation and the endorsement of the GFCM Framework Programme

(2013-2018). The indications came out by these events were already partially included in the workplan carried out in the intersessional period and in that proposed for the next year.

13. The meeting was reminded of the five main areas of intervention of the Project: i) strengthening of the sub-regional network; ii) supporting the establishment of a sub-regional fisheries monitoring system, based on standardized research methodologies; iii) identification of management schemes to be applied on a pilot scale in selected zones towards strengthening the international and regional cooperation; iv) supporting shared resource management decisions, including promotion of harmonised fisheries legislation; v) supporting the development of responsible mariculture, in particular for the enhancement of positive interaction between fisheries and aquaculture.

14. The Coordination Committee was informed that the relations and synergies with the participating countries were further strengthened, and greater coordination was sought with the Donors. This contributed to the improved implementation of the Project activities, as several missions and specific, technical meetings were held with National Focal Points, and representatives of fisheries research institutions and administrations.

15. Where direct technical support is concerned, the Project continued to provide technical support to the countries for the creation and updating of databases, Web pages and national information systems as in the past. In particular activities in support to national fisheries statistics is being initiated to the Water and Fisheries Resources Directorate (WFRD) of Albania (previously covered by the MedFisis Project). Furthermore, the Project continued developing a database to store, manage and make preliminary analysis of small pelagic data. A working version of the database was presented to the annual AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagics Fisheries Resources in October 2012. The web portal (www.faoadriamed.org) is being also further updated both in terms of structure and contents.

16. The Meeting was further informed on the AdriaMed Trawl Survey Information System (ATrIS), which is now the common tool used by more than 20 Mediterranean research institutes to manage trawl survey data. The upgrading of the software was begun in order to include the latest modification of the MEDITS protocol. Furthermore, in collaboration with FAO-RNE (Near East Regional Office), a proposal to develop a version of ATrIS particularly suited to the recent and historical geo-referenced fisheries data in Oman was drafted, following a specific request from the Sultanate of Oman. Ad hoc training sessions on the use of ATrIS were organised for the staff of the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Durres (Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania) in September and October 2012. Technical assistance and training on the use and basic features of ATrIS was also provided, in collaboration with the FAO Project MedSudMed, to experts of the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM) of Tunisia.

17. In the context of the establishment of sub-regional fisheries monitoring system, a Study Group for the application of bottom-trawl survey data to fish stock assessment in South Adriatic Sea was held in September 2012. During the Study Group preliminary analysis was carried out and the results were presented and discussed at the AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG DEM). The WG DEM discussed on the results of the monitoring system for the Montenegrin fisheries sector as well as the results of the SoleMon (Stock Assessment of *Solea solea* in the northern and central Adriatic Sea and evaluation of the impact of the different fishing activities) and SoleDiff (Genetic differentiation of *Solea solea* and *S. aegyptiaca* in northern Adriatic Sea and population structure of Common sole in the Mediterranean) Projects. The stock assessments produced by the WG-DEM for Common sole *Solea solea,* and Spottail mantis shrimp, *Squilla mantis* in GSA 17 and for European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and Deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) in GSA 18, as well as a preliminary assessment on Red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*) stock for GSA 17 were presented and discussed during the GFCM-SAC-SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment of Demersal Species, held in November 2012.

18. On-the-job training on the application of age-based analytical models for the preliminary assessment of selected demersal stocks (i.e. *Merluccius merluccius*, *Mullus barbatus*, *Nephrops norvegicus*, *Pagellus erythrinus* and *Scyliorhinus canicula*) was organised at IOF (Split, Croatia) in January 2013.

19. The Project continued to facilitate the scientific experiments carried out in the Pomo/Jabuka Pits area on *Nephrops norvegicus* stocks, by using the towed UnderWater TV (UWTV) methodology. Furthermore the Project supported the full participation of South Adriatic countries to the EC funded MEDITS programme, ensuring the coverage of the entire GSA 18 and the further development of experience on bottom trawl surveys of national experts.

20. The Meeting was informed on activities concerning small pelagic species: the annual meeting of the AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources (WG-SP) took place in October 2012. The stock assessments of anchovy and sardine were jointly performed for GSA 17. Project support was described concerning the standardization of methodologies applied to small pelagic fisheries resources. In July/August 2012, a joint acoustic and ichthyoplankton survey using R/V "Dallaporta" covering South Adriatic waters (GSA18) was carried out, including training activities.

21. AdriaMed organized two meetings of the Study Group on Daily Eggs Production Method (SG-DEPM) aimed at revising the DEPM protocol used and improving the accuracy of staging (eggs, larvae and postlarvae). During the meetings agreement was found on the ageing of Post Ovulatory Follicles (POFs) and a small Atlas was produced. All results of the SG-DEPM were presented at the GFCM- SAC –SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment on Small Pelagic Species. The Project also organised the Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading, SG-OTH, part of

annual programme that foresees intercalibration exercise and exchange of otoliths alternating anchovy and sardine year by year.

22. The Meeting was further informed on Project support for the implementation of a monitoring system for the Montenegrin fishery sector, developed in coherence with the indications given by the GFCM and according to the EU regulations. Synergies were found with the "EC funded IPA Project on the sustainable development of the fisheries sector of Montenegro" (Europeaid/128947/C/SER/ME), supported by the European Delegation in Montenegro, to elaborate a draft proposal for fisheries management plans in the country.

23. The Project organized the AdriaMed Technical Meeting on Adriatic Sea Small-Scale Fisheries, ten years after the first meeting on this key issue. The Meeting reviewed the current knowledge and the status of small-scale fisheries in Adriatic countries. Needs and priorities were identified and the basis was established for cooperative future work.

24. All possible opportunities for capacity building were exploited during the meetings and exercises described, furthermore the Meeting was informed on all the *ad hoc* on the job training activities carried out in the intersessional period.

25. The meeting learned that the Project continued in its pilot approach through multilevel consultations (fisheries administration and research institutions) toward the support in the identification of ways and means to elaborate possible management options to be adopted in the Adriatic Sea. In the intersessional period the attention was mainly dedicated to the Pomo/Jabuka fishing grounds and to the small pelagic fisheries. Two ad hoc meetings were organized in June 2012 and January 2013, respectively.

26. The Meeting was also reminded that cooperation was further sustained with the GFCM Secretariat and the GFCM Subsidiary Bodies, the other FAO Regional Projects. Cooperation with "MedSea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedSea-LME)" Project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)" on topics of common interest was also sought. A further update of the information on the legislative framework in the Adriatic countries is ongoing. Lastly the Meeting heard that the Project continued providing technical support to the countries on matters related to the sustainable development of aquaculture.

27. 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 last Coordination Committee, being totally coherent with them.

28. The representative of Croatia pointed out the importance of the Technical meeting on small scale fisheries (SSF, Croatia, November 2012) and the support to the discussion on fisheries management. The meeting on SSF was the prelude to the renewal of the AdriaMed Working Group on SSF already established in 2003. Such a Working Group will broaden the range of fisheries related issue covered by the Project and fills a gap that hampered the development of cooperative discussion on fisheries in the

Adriatic Sea. He envisaged that the support on fisheries management issues, successfully initiated in 2012, should continue in the future and should be tackled as a major component of the Project in the future.

29. The GFCM Secretariat representative congratulated with the project for the amount of work carried out in the intersession period. The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the GFCM and its subsidiary bodies benefit considerably from the work developed by the Project, thus including joint stock assessment and support to fisheries management.

30. The Project staff informed the Meeting of the conclusions reached in the framework of the FAO Independent Evaluation carried out in 2012. The Committee was reminded that the objective of the evaluation of the project was to provide accountability to the participating Member Countries and resource partners on the extent of Project's result, and to draw lessons and formulate recommendations for the potential future role and strategies of the four Projects evaluated. The Evaluation found strong evidence that the project had been well managed and its strategies had been consistent with the expressed requirements of the participating countries.

31. The Committee was informed on the main recommendations made in the Evaluation report, in particular : i) the Project should improve the development and diffusion of scientific publications on activities and research carried out within the projects; enhance focus on multidisciplinary research in support of fisheries management compatible with EAF; ii) the project should include activities aimed at increasing the harmonization of fisheries management strategies in the region.

Development of the Project's Programme for the next period (Agenda items 4 & 5)

32. The document "Project Future Implementation" was introduced by the Project Coordinator. The Meeting was thus informed on the concrete steps that the Project will take in the next twelve months. Where small pelagic resources are concerned, the AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Resources (WG-SP) is scheduled to meet in the second half of the year, the WG-SP aims to discuss the progress made on monitoring activities with particular attention to the Study Group on DEPM, the Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading, the Coordinating Team on Echo Survey and the overall stock assessment activities. A joint acoustic and DEPM (Daily Eggs Production Method) survey covering South Adriatic waters (GSA18) will be organized; the Project will continue to foster the rebuilding and further development of the expertise on DEPM, among the activities, the Project is planning a meeting of the SG-DEPM to focus specifically on larvae/postlarvae ageing in order to eliminate possible uncertainties and misinterpretation related to inaccuracy in the ageing process.

33. The Project will continue to support participating countries in the process of standardization of data collection and analysis, in the case of the Study Group on

intercalibration of fish otolith reading (SG-OTH) the specific aims are to develop a standard for the sub-region and to set a periodical monitoring of the "reading" activities by establishing a regular exchange of otoliths among the Adriatic research institutes. The SG-OTH should therefore progress, under the supervision of the Project, in the preparation of a photographic atlas of otoliths and should include also the analysis and intercalibration of demersal fish otoliths (e.g. *Mullus barbatus*).

34. The Committee was informed that, in relation to demersal resources, the Project will continue supporting the process of standardization of sampling methodologies and monitoring, and appraisal of demersal stocks. Support will be provided directly to research institutions and also for the participation of national experts in international surveys carried out in the Adriatic Sea. The annual AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG-DEM) will be organized in the second half of the year to discuss the progress made on monitoring activities in the Adriatic area.

35. Specific activities on the sole stocks in the Project area will continue: support for the SoleMon programme "Stock Assessment of *Solea solea* in the northern and central Adriatic Sea and evaluation of the impact of the different fishing activities", will be provided, a meeting will be organized that will also address the results of the SoleDiff project aimed at the assessment genetic differentiation of *Solea solea* and *S. aegyptiaca* and population structure of the common sole in northern Adriatic Sea. Support will be given to data analysis of the Under Water Television Survey for *Nephrops norvegicus* in Jabuka/Pomo Pit area.

36. The Project recalled activities in the last two years concerning the organization of the Study Group on GSA 18 for the application of bottom-trawl survey data and fishery commercial data to fish stock assessment in South Adriatic Sea. This activity will continue to receive the Project's support. A similar Study Group will be organised also for GSA 17. Technical Document N. 8 "Review of current knowledge on shared demersal stocks of the Adriatic Sea" first published in 2004 should be finalized and published in 2013.

37. Training activities will be transversal to all the activities outlined. Given the general need expressed by the participating countries, the possibility of organising training on stock assessment, basic and advanced level will be explored, either to be prepared by AdriaMed or by taking advantage of training sessions organized by other FAO Mediterranean Projects in the context of the GFCM Framework Programme. In addition a specific training course on fishery statistics and parameterization may be organized.

38. Technical support will continue to be provided to the participating countries concerning socio economic aspects of the fisheries sector (GFCM Task 1). In particular the Project is organizing a socio-economic data collection programme in Albania. Furthermore the Project will continue to assist participating countries in updating/amending their fisheries and aquaculture national legislation in order to contribute to their harmonization with the GFCM resolutions, the FAO Code of

Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other international conventions and principles. In this context the Project initiated the updating of the information on the legislative framework in the Adriatic countries and the publication of specific revised technical document is foreseen in the coming period.

39. Technical support will continue to be provided to the participating countries for the creation and updating of databases, Web pages and national information systems. Furthermore the Project will continue to support the national fisheries statistics systems, direct support is in place and will continue in Albania and Montenegro. ATrIS will be further upgraded, *inter alia* to reflect the modification of the new MEDITS protocol in the application. Training will be carried out according to the countries' requirements. On the basis of the experienced gained through the preparation of ATrIS, the Project will finalise the design and development of a database to store, manage and making preliminary analysis of small pelagic data.

40. The Committee was also informed on activities planned in the framework of fisheries management. The Project is investigating the possibility to further progress on the issue of indicators following the work carried out in the past and the continued relevance of the matter in the context of the GFCM and of the European Commission. Particular attention will be given to all fisheries management related problems and activities involving all the countries of the region. Assistance will be provided on request for the harmonization of existing fisheries management schemes at national and sub-regional levels. Following the requests received by the Project and the indication given by the FAO External evaluation of the Project, AdriaMed will facilitate the organization of meetings to bring together scientists, government representatives, and representatives of fishing sector to discuss fisheries management issues.

41. Following the AdriaMed Technical meeting on Adriatic Sea Small-scale Fisheries held last year, the Project will re-establish the transversal Working Group of experts on small scale fisheries. Synergies with the GFCM for the forthcoming First regional workshop on sustainable artisanal fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea will be sought.

42. The Project will continue to support the countries when requested for the collection of data on aquaculture consistent with the GFCM requirements (GFCM/2009/33/4 Recommendation) and GFCM CAQ INDAM guidelines and in supporting pilot studies on the interactions between capture fisheries and aquaculture. Assistance at present is continuing in Montenegro.

43. The Project will continue to strengthen international and regional cooperation at Mediterranean level with the GFCM and its related bodies. Moreover the project will act in concert with, and will be part of, the new GFCM proposed framework programme for 2013-2018. The existing cooperation with other FAO Regional Projects will continue and further collaboration with CopeMed II, and EastMed will be sought. Synergies with other initiatives acting in the Mediterranean regarding

fishery subjects of interest for the Adriatic region will be sought for the sake of avoiding duplication of efforts and optimizing the use of human and financial resources.

44. The Coordination Committee agreed on the work plan presented as it takes into account all the priorities emerged in the Adriatic region. The work plan was further integrated with comments provided by national representatives.

45. When small pelagic are concerned, the representative of Croatia recalled to the participants the importance and amount of data collected at sea in the entire Adriatic region during both acoustic and demersal surveys. He pointed out the importance to take the best possible advantage of these data and, as done for demersal, to use them to try to draw annual maps of distribution of small pelagic fish. In particular, the work should focus on the identification of areas of concentration of spawners and their possible variation over time, with the final objective to provide the fisheries managers with the best possible information to ensure sustainable exploitation of fish stocks. He also mentioned that, with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, spawning areas of sardine in Croatian waters in recent times were preliminary identified. However, further support should be envisaged to complete the work and to extend it to the entire Adriatic area. On this regard, the AdriaMed National Focal Point for Italy, informed the Coordination Committee that data have been collected in the past in fixed stations to identify areas and season of reproduction of small pelagic fish in the GSA 17 for several years (almost 35 years). This data will be summarized and presented to the next AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources.

46. The Coordination Committee agreed that effort should be put in place in the forthcoming period to pool together existing data and try to define spawning areas and season for sardine and anchovies.

47. The importance of producing a document summarizing the current market situation and potentialities for small pelagic fish in the Adriatic region was underlined. In this regard the Fisheries Officer of the FAO Regional Office for Eastern Central Europe (FAO REU) informed the meeting that a document summarizing the trade and market activities done in the Black Sea on anchovy, was prepared within the EUROFISH framework.

48. Referring to the support provided by AdriaMed in data collection, the representative of Montenegro underlined the importance of the biological sampling (in line with the EC DCF) put in place in the country with the support of the Project. Also thank to this activity and to the skill and expertise developed, Montenegro will initiate a national fisheries monitoring plan according to the EC DCF.

49. The GFCM Secretariat representative underlined that the current phase (increase of importance towards management plans) of the Project will be instrumental to support the implementation of the GFCM Guidelines for multiannual management plans. The GFCM has approved these Guidelines in 2012, and is currently in the process to

develop and propose adoption of a management plan for red coral, which underlines the importance of the establishment of management plans in the Mediterranean. In particular, he reiterated that, when small pelagic fish and fisheries are concerned, also thank to the support by AdriaMed, a lot of expertise and high quality data exists in the Adriatic, thus providing an excellent baseline to plan fisheries management. He acknowledged that the development of a management plan is a process that requires time, but reiterated that the GFCM is ready to provide the appropriate support to this process in cooperation with the Adriatic institutions and AdriaMed. In particular, the GFCM guidelines for drafting management plan could be used as supporting tool.

50. The representative of Italy acknowledged the work carried out by the Project and expressed satisfaction to the efforts put in place by the Project in the perspective of a the new challenges emerging in the Adriatic area and the Project is called to face in the future. He reiterated the willingness of the MiPAAF to continue providing support to the AdriaMed Project.

51. He also stressed that, in this phase of renovation at regional level, with the new GFCM Framework Programme and the emerging priorities for the Adriatic fisheries, the Project should take advantage of the experience acquired and make additional efforts in supporting the steps forward to fisheries management in the Adriatic Sea.

52. With reference to the fisheries management plans, the representative from Montenegro highlighted the non homogeneous situation currently existing in Adriatic countries. In particular mention was given to the historical tradition on fisheries of Italy and Croatia and the expertise that have been accrued in these countries in the last centuries. Montenegro is now facing the new challenge of re-organization of the fisheries sector, at administration and scientific research level. Recruitment of staff is in place and this process will allow the country to be more and more active in the cooperation and coordination in the Adriatic and in the Mediterranean within AdriaMed and the GFCM. The Fisheries Unit at the Ministry of Agriculture is under re-organization and the country recently held the first screening meeting for the accession phase to the European Union. In this context, one of the main priorities for the country will be the preparation of a national management plan for fisheries.

53. The representative of Albania, agreed with the importance of tackling fisheries management issues within the framework of the Project and stressed the importance of keeping always constant the information flow between the research institutions and the fisheries administrations. Referring to the small pelagic fisheries resources she underlined the need to support activities on market related aspects that may affect and drive the fisheries sector. She therefore stressed the importance for the Project to tackle such aspects at Adriatic level before initiating any action concerning management of fisheries exploiting small pelagic fish.

54. Acknowledging the completeness of the work plan on all the issues concerning fisheries resources, the representative of the GFCM Secretariat noted that it encompassed almost all the issues that are included in the proposal work plan of the

SAC for 2013. He also stressed the importance to address the issue of fisheries Reference Points (RPs) in the framework of AdriaMed with the final objective to contribute to the discussion that will be further developed within the SAC in the future. He proposed to include technical discussion on RPs in the agenda of the AdriaMed Working Group on Fisheries Resources (both Demersal and the Small Pelagic).

55. The Committee was then recalled on the work carried out so far by AdriaMed on the biological (single and group of species and environmental) and economic indicators, reference values and the traffic light approach. The importance to update that work done on this issue integrating also to discussion on RPs was stressed. The Committee agreed to include in the agenda of the next Working Groups a moment for discussion on the RPs and to update to this extent the work done on the suit of bio-economic indicators.

56. For what concern the activities related to small scale fisheries, the representative of the GFCM Secretariat informed the Committee that in the proposal work plan of the SAC there is the organization of one symposium on SSF preceded by a preparatory working group. In this view, as for the other GFCM meetings and Working Groups, the outcomes achieved at sub-regional level in the framework of AdriaMed and of other FAO Projects, can be instrumental to feed the discussion during the GFCM meetings.

57. Regarding the training activities proposed, general agreement was expressed. Mention was given to the successful approach adopted in the past when on-the-job training on real data and samples were organized. The proposal to follow the same approach also for what concern stock assessment was taken into consideration. The Committee recommended that the Project organize training sessions on stock assessment taking advantage of real data existing in the Adriatic, thus leading, at the end of the course, to the preparation of preliminary stock assessment and advice for management.

58. In this context, the Project Coordinator of CopeMed II, Mr JuanAntonio Caminãs informed the Committee that request was formulated by CopeMed II participating countries to carry out: i) an “advanced” training course on stock assessment; and ii) a training course on ichthyoplankton in cooperation with the other FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects and the GFCM Secretariat. The importance of synergies between the FAO Mediterranean Projects on capacity development in general, as sought in the past, was reiterated.

59. The representative of Albania recalled to the Committee the support provided to Albania on data collection for aquaculture by FAO through the Regional Office for Europe (FAO REU) and the AdriaMed Project. This support started in 2010 and was further strengthened in the last years. She expressed the whish that the collection of data on aquaculture will continue in the future and can become routine work as for capture fisheries.

60. The representative of Croatia called the attention of the Committee on the importance to strengthen discussion and connection with fishermen and fisheries stakeholders generally, especially when fisheries management is concerned. The committee agreed with the comment and concurred that the Project should foresee a discussion meeting promoting the participation of all the actors involved in fisheries to fill the gap currently existing between fisheries administration, research institutions and fishing operators.

61. The representative of Albania, further thanked the Project for the effort put in place for the preparation of the meeting documents that summarize the work done and introduced the work plan for the forthcoming period. He also stressed the importance of the Project in fostering cooperation and in the development of activities specifically suited to fit with Albanian priorities and to support the country to be consistent with GFCM requirements. In particular, thanks to the effort put in place by the project, Albania has a fishing fleet register, participate to joint discussion and activities, and collected statistical information on aquaculture. He informed the Committee that the importance of the Project for Albania and for the Adriatic was also pointed out by Albanian representatives during a recent meeting with EC. He welcomed the work plan presented by the project and further reiterated the importance that the Project continue its activities.

FAO GFCM work plan for the next intersessional period (Agenda item 6)

62. The scientific and technical activities foreseen in the FAO GFCM work plan for 2013 were presented to the Meeting by the GFCM Secretariat Representative. Discussion was initiated on how the activities foreseen by the Project are integrated and will contribute to the First GFCM Framework Programme (2013-2018).

63. He recalled the GFCM Framework Programme (2013-2018) with its 5 work programmes (4 thematic and 1 geographical) with actions an activities to be implemented with approval through ad hoc arrangements with donors on multi annual multi donor basis.

64. The Committee was informed that the activities already endorsed by the GFCM for 2013 are related to: i) strengthening of data collection in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea; ii) testing the feasibility of implementing the GFCM guidelines for the management plans; iii) Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, monitoring control and surveillance (MCS) and regional fleet; iv) concerted actions for Lebanon; v) the cooperation for the sustainable use of the marine biological resources in the Mediterranean; vi) enhancing the development of artisanal fisheries.

65. Subsequently, the presentation focused on the Workshop on fisheries data collection and management plans in the Adriatic Sea. The objectives of the Workshop are: i) to improve the efficiency of the GFCM data collection framework at sub-regional level; ii) improve the definition of the data; and iii) improve efficiency of the submission

tools and the harmonization of GFCM requirements with national data collection systems. The objectives of the meeting on Management Plans have been presented to the Committee as follow: i) to identify the emerging issues and needs for the management of small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and 18); ii) to advance towards a multi-annual management plan for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (design strategy, discuss on general objectives and proposed actions to address emerging issues, discuss the requirements for scientific monitoring of small pelagic stocks at sub-regional level).

66. A description of a further activity focused on the Adriatic region was provided. The Committee was informed that a project was initiated on the sustainable use of the marine biological resources in the Mediterranean funded by the Italian Ministry of Environment. This project is included within the GFCM Framework Programme. The objectives of this project are: i) to harmonize criteria to define environmental targets for exploited populations; ii) to define the status of different Mediterranean exploited marine populations, taking into account relevant socio-economic aspects and the design of monitor requirement to ensure maintenance of good environmental status (expected case study in the Adriatic study to be decided in the kick off meeting in June 2013).

67. To complete the information the activity concerning the workshop on sustainable artisanal fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea was briefly outlined. The key points that the workshop will address are related to: i) the in-depth and realistic analysis of the past and present situation; ii) the involvement of all the actors (fishermen, communities, national fishery administration, costal-zone stakeholders, etc.); iii) the overcome the limitation of "local fishery" concept for the sector (management, marketing, research, integration within MPAs, etc.); iv) the review of the normative framework at regional level.

68. During the ensued discussion, the Committee expressed general agreement with the principle and activities presented and in particular with the need to develop a management plan for the small pelagic fisheries operating in the Adriatic Sea. The Committee on this regard reiterated that AdriaMed and the GFCM could provide the proper framework for initiating and developing discussion on management of these fisheries. The participants also agreed that the process leading to the development of a management plan foresees several steps and requires the appropriate timing.

69. On this view, the Coordination Committee welcomed the idea presented by the GFCM Secretariat representative to develop, as first step and, in cooperation with AdriaMed, a baseline document summarizing the information on small pelagic fisheries and fisheries resources (including socio-economic aspects). This document should be the technical milestone for forthcoming discussion on management of these fisheries.

Other matters (Agenda item 7)

70. The Committee was informed by representatives of Croatia, Slovenia and Italy about the outcomes of a meeting held in Brussels with EC DG MARE to discuss on a proposal management plan for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in the central and northern Adriatic and on transitional conservation measures in the south Adriatic Sea. A brief outline of the general contents of the EC proposal was provided. Attention to the specificity of the measures proposed and to the time frame proposed was called on.

71. After a thorough discussion all the AdriaMed participating countries concurred on the importance to find a common position and agreed on that any development of future management plans should be done within the framework of the GFCM guidelines for management plans. A common position is reported in Annex E.

72. The Project staff and the Committee generally acknowledged the importance of the issue and of its implications for fisheries in the Adriatic Sea.

Adoption of the report and Date and venue of the next Coordination Committee meeting (Agenda items 8 & 9)

73. After thorough discussion and comment on the content of the Document CC/14/03, the Committee agreed on the programme of activities proposed (Annex E) and suggestions made by the participants for the coming period; some specific elements were pointed out with reference to some activities and related outputs. The activities will be carried out upon budget availability. In particular, the Committee stressed the importance of the following activities:

- Facilitate the preparation of annual maps of distribution of small pelagic fish
- Support to the socio-economic survey in Albania
- Continue supporting the national fisheries statistical systems to address the requirement of the GFCM Task 1
- Prepare an overview of the market related aspects of small pelagic fisheries resources in the Adriatic Sea
- Progress in the discussion on Small Scale Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea
- Progress towards the discussion on harmonised fisheries management in the Adriatic Sea
- Explore the possibility and tentatively implement activities to involve fisheries Stakeholders
- Continue to support aquaculture related activities in Albania and Montenegro

74. The Delegates and Meeting participants expressed their thanks to the Croatia authorities for having hosted the meeting in Postira.

75. Upon the kind invitation of the Italian delegation, the next Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee will be held in Italy. The date and venue will be proposed in due time by the Project. This proposal was welcomed by the Meeting participants.

This report has been adopted on 19 March 2013.

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Agenda

Monday 18 March 2013

1. **Opening of the meeting and election of the Chairperson**

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

3. **Report on the Project's progress**
The main activities and the Project's outputs will be presented and reviewed. Information will be given on the activities of the AdriaMed Working Groups, the on-going cooperative research work, the training sessions, and the relationship and cooperation of the Project at Mediterranean level. The outcomes of the FAO independent evaluation, carried out in 2012 on the Project operate will be briefly illustrated.

4. **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 programmes, the training activities, the joint activities directed toward the national capacity development and the preparatory work towards joint fishery management decisions in the project area. Particular attention will be given to the follow-up of AdriaMed Working Groups and initiatives on the fisheries socio-economic aspects. The international cooperation, the relationship with other projects at Adriatic level, the relationship with the Donors, with the GFCM 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.

5. **Development of the Project's Programme for the next period (cont.)**

6. **FAO GFCM work plan for the next intersession period**

The scientific and technical activities foreseen in the FAO GFCM work plan for 2013 will be presented. Discussion on how the activities foreseen by the Project are integrated and will contribute to the First GFCM Framework Programme (2013-2018) will be held.

7. **Other matters**

Tuesday 19 March 2013

8. **Adoption of the report**

9. **Date and venue of the next Coordination Committee meeting**

Report on the intersessional activities of the Project
(March 2012 – February 2013)

This paper summarizes the main activities carried out by the Project AdriaMed between March 2012 and February 2013, including workshops, training, research activities and the technical assistance provided to the countries; as well as the cooperation established with the GFCM, the SAC, the CAQ and Sub-Committees and other relevant institutions. The work programme and recommendations of the 13th Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee (Tirana, Albania, 26-28 March 2012) were implemented (CC/14/info2).

Moreover, according to the ruling procedures of FAO, due to the total budget and the life span of the project, AdriaMed was subject to an external independent evaluation (as also foreseen in the Project Document). The FAO Office of Evaluation, the Fisheries Department and Project management agreed that the evaluation be held in the first half of 2012. A FAO Independent Evaluation Team, was selected and initiated the evaluation on March 2012. The evaluation assessed the work carried out through the project and provided accountability to the participating Member Countries, to resource partners including the Italian MiPAAF, the European Commission, and FAO on the extent of Projects' results, including outputs, outcome and impact – actual and potential - to date. Lessons learnt were drawn and recommendations were formulated 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 Project continuation will also be assessed (CC/13/04).

The activities carried out during the inter-committee period comply with the methodological framework of the Project and its mandate for this phase. This report details the main outputs of the Project activities and the results achieved with direct reference to the following Project Objectives:

1. Strengthening of the sub-regional network by involving relevant institutions of the fisheries sector to follow up on aspects of scientific coordination and cooperation.
2. Supporting the establishment of a sub-regional fisheries monitoring system, based on standardized research methodologies.
3. Identification of management schemes to be applied on a pilot scale in selected zones towards strengthening the international and regional cooperation.
4. Supporting shared resource management decisions, including promotion of harmonised fisheries legislation.
5. Supporting the development of responsible mariculture, in particular for the enhancement of positive interaction between fisheries and aquaculture.

1. **Strengthening of the sub-regional network by involving relevant institutions of the fisheries sector to follow up on aspects of scientific coordination and cooperation**

Meetings with the participating Member countries

The relations and interactions with the participating countries were further strengthened, which contributed to the improved implementation of the Project activities. Several missions were organised to Croatia (Split), Montenegro (Kotor and Podgorica), Slovenia (Ljubljana) and Albania (Tirana and Durrës). The objective of the mission was to follow up with planned activities and find overall agreement on possible future joint actions to be carried out in the framework or with the support of the Project. The meetings were held at the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (Split), at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Montenegro, at the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (IBMK), at the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Slovenia, at the Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia, at the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Directorate of Fisheries Policies of Albania, and at the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Agricultural University of Tirana.

In particular, a meeting with the Director General of Fisheries Directorate of Albania, was held to better adapt Project support to the emerging priorities of the country, whereas on Summer 2012 and in Autumn specific meetings with the Assistant to the Minister for Fishery of the Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia were held to define a road map for the future involvement of Croatia in the Project.

Informal meetings were held during all the year and occasion was taken back to back to international meetings to liaise with representatives and experts of the participating countries (both fisheries administrations and research institutes).

Meetings with the Donors

As indicated in the last meetings of the Coordination Committee and also by the FAO Independent Evaluation, the Project strengthened the liaison with the Donors (MiPAAF and EU-DG-MARE) and intensified the meeting of coordination with them In the intersession al period several meeting of Coordination were held at the MiPAAF headquarter.

A meeting was held with MiPAAF with representatives of EU-DGMARE, all the FAO Regional Mediterranean Projects (AdriaMed, MedSudMed, EastMed and CopeMed II) and all the Donors (Italy, Spain and Greece) in Brussels, Belgium, 25 June 2012.

A coordination meeting with FAO FIRF and EU-DG MARE was organized in FAO-HQ Rome, Italy 10-11 January 2013.

Technical support to the Member countries

The Project continued to provide technical support to the countries for the creation and updating of databases, Web pages and national information systems as in the past years.

In particular, technical support to the Water and Fisheries Resources Directorate (WFRD) Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration of the Government of Albania is being provided on national fisheries statistics which was previously covered by the MedFisis Project (ended in July 2011).

Following the recommendations of the 11th and 12th and 13th Project Coordination Committee (Montenegro, 2010, Slovenia, 2011 and Albania 2012 respectively) and the discussion held during the annual Working Group of Small Pelagics, on the basis of the experiences gained

through the preparation of ATrIS, the Project is developing a database to store, manage and carry out preliminary analysis of small pelagic data. The technical team in charge of the software development fully involved researchers from all the institutes participating in the project in the collection and management of data of small pelagics in the Adriatic Sea. A beta consolidate version of the database was presented to the annual AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagics Fisheries Resources in October 2012. The team received several comments and feedback to better tailor the database to the real needs of the research institutions and the process is being finalized.

AdriaMed Portal

The AdriaMed portal (www.faoadriamed.org) and the AdriaMed databases are available on line. The Project is in the process of restructuring the information included in the portal to group it according to new areas of interest to website users. Work is being made on the re-organization of the sections and the databases available on the web with close cooperation of the research institutes of the participating countries. Over the last year, about 135.000 web pages were visited and over 65.000 users visited the AdriaMed web site. Over 54,000 AdriaMed Technical Documents have been downloaded in the last six years. The most recent Project publications are also disseminated through the Project's mailing list, which includes 474 scientists and institutions.

AdriaMed Trawl Survey Information System (ATrIS)

The updated version of the AdriaMed Trawl Survey Information System (ATrIS, version 2.1), the computerized system developed to organize storage and undertake preliminary analysis of the trawl surveys data has been distributed to all the institutes participating in the Project. In particular this new version includes a module for the estimation of biological indicators (identified by the Adriatic area researchers). ATrIS is now the common tools being used by more than 20 Mediterranean research institutes to manage trawl survey data (including in many cases MEDITS data). The Project initiated to upgrade the software in order to include the latest modification of the MEDITS protocol (adopted in Summer 2012).
Moreover, following a request from the Director General of Fisheries Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman, the Project drafted, in collaboration with FAO-RNE a proposal to develop a version of ATrIS particularly suited to the recent and historical geo-referenced fisheries data in Oman. Support to the research institutes on the use and/or development of special/new features of ATrIS was further provided: an *ad hoc* training course on the use of ATrIS has been organized for the staff of the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Durres (Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania); technical assistance was also provided to experts of the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM) of Sfax (Tunisia) to install, familiarise and initiate data entry and reporting using ATrIS.

Information on Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (ASFA)

As one of the ASFA International Partners, the AdriaMed Project is continuing the activities carried out so far for the inclusion of Adriatic Scientific publications in the ASFA database, as well as supporting the two collaboration centres created at the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (IOF) in Split, Croatia, and at the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (Montenegro). 130 ASFA records have been submitted to the Publisher of ASFA (ProQuest).

In this context, articles from journals published in Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia in the database (e.g. Acta Adriatica, Ribarstvo, Anali za Istrske in Mediteranske študije-Series Historia Naturalis, Studia Marina) are regularly included in the ASFA database. Assistance by providing feedback and technical support to the two centres has been provided. In addition, the Project continued to support the FAO ASFA Secretariat by providing feedback to the ASFA National Partners of Egypt. A report summarizing the activities carried out and the records submitted to the ASFA publisher has been prepared and submitted to the ASFA Board Meeting (Oranmore, Ireland, 25-29 June 2012) (CC/14/info16).

2. Supporting the establishment of a sub-regional fisheries monitoring system, based on standardized research methodologies

As part of its mandate AdriaMed continued to support the establishment of monitoring systems (at national and sub-regional levels) through, *inter alia*, the standardization of the methodologies commonly applied on fisheries research. The activities under this component foresee support to scientific surveys, coordination meetings, scientific researches. The activities addressed both demersal and small pelagic fisheries resources (below reported).

Demersal fisheries resources

Study Group for the application of bottom-trawl survey data to fish stock assessment in South Adriatic Sea (GSA 18)

The Project continued to support the establishment of sub-regional fisheries monitoring system as well as to foster the scientific cooperation in the area. To this extent and in order to progress in the joint evaluation of the shared stocks, the Project organized the Study Group for the application of bottom-trawl survey data to fish stock assessment in South Adriatic Sea (Italy, Torre a Mare 3-7 September 2012). The Study Group, kindly hosted by COISPA Tecnologia & Ricerca (Italy), was carried out to joint analyse data on hake (*Merluccius merluccius)* and Deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) collected in the area by scientific trawl surveys together with commercial fisheries data. Scientists from Albania, Montenegro and Italy participated in the training provided on the use of different tools for stock assessment. A preliminary stock assessment was made for *M. merluccius* and *P. longirostris* by using the data collected during the MEDITS surveys in the South Adriatic Sea as well as available commercial fishery data. The results were then presented and discussed at the AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources, Italy, Fano 17-19 September 2012, (CC/14/info9).

Working Group on Demersal Fishery Resources (WG-DEM)

The annual meeting of the AdriaMed Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG-DEM) was held at the Laboratory of Marine Biology of Fano (Italy, 17-19 September 2012). The meeting was attended by researchers from the Adriatic fisheries research institutes involved in the Project and members from the AdriaMed networks. The WG focused on the appraisal and stock assessment (standard and alternative methods) of demersal stocks and on indicators and reference points which may be considered at regional

level in line with the EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The result of the monitoring system for the Montenegrin fisheries sector were presented as well as the results of the SoleMon and SoleDiff Projects. The stock assessments produced by the WG-DEM for Common sole *Solea solea,* and Spottail mantis shrimp, *Squilla mantis* in GSA 17 and for European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and Deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) in GSA 18 were presented and discussed during the GFCM-SAC-SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment of Demersal Species (Split, Croatia, 5-9 November 2012) together with a preliminary assessment on Red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*) stock for GSA 17. Full details can be found in the relative Meeting Memorandum and stock assessment forms (CC/14/info5 and CC/14/info6).

***Solea solea* related activities**

In the framework of the activities related to the Demersal Fisheries Resources, the Project supported the cooperation, between the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries of Split (IOF) and CNR - Istituto Scienze Marine (ISMAR) of Ancona for the "Stock Assessment of *Solea solea* in the northern and central Adriatic Sea and evaluation of the impact of the different fishing activities" (SoleMon) research programme. In November 2012 the eighth SoleMon survey covering the North-Central Adriatic Sea was carried out with mixed scientific crew from Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. The stock assessments for sole *Solea solea* in GSA 17 was performed and presented for discussion at the AdriaMed Working Group of Demersal Fisheries Resources and then at the GFCM SAC - SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species (Split, Croatia, 5-9 November 2012), (CC/14/info6).

In addition, a research activity to support analysis on differentiation of *Solea solea* and *Solea aegyptiaca* inhabiting Northern Adriatic Sea and the identification of the population structure of common sole (*S. solea*) in the whole Adriatic Sea and the related stock assessment has been initiated with the support of the Project. The research activity, namely SoleDiff is being carried out in cooperation with the ISMAR-CNR of Ancona, the University of Bologna and the other research institutions of the Adriatic Sea. Preliminary details can be found in the relative report (CC/14/info12).

Support to the research programmes on demersal stocks in the Adriatic

In the framework of the activities related to the demersal fisheries resources, the Project is supporting the full participation of South Adriatic Sea countries to the EC funded MEDITS programme. Participation to the annual MEDITS Coordination meeting (Ljubljana, Slovenia 6-8 March 2012; Heraklion (Greece), 12-14 March 2013) was supported. In addition the extension to the eastern waters of the South Adriatic Sea (Albania and Montenegro) of the MEDITS trawl survey was supported with scientific campaigns carried out in July 2012. During the survey theoretical and onboard training activities have been carried out for new national staff from Albania.

Moreover, the Project continued to support the scientific experiments carried out in the Pomo/Jabuka Pits area on *Nephrops norvegicus* stocks as an example of methodology to assess demersal fisheries resources giving additional data to compare with the trawl survey data. The Istituto di Scienze Marine (CNR – ISMAR) of Ancona (Italy) in cooperation with the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries of Split (Croatia), under the auspices of AdriaMed, carried out an evaluation of the *N. norvegicus* stocks in the Jabuka/Pomo pits area using the towed UnderWater TV (UWTV) methodology in April-May 2012.

Small pelagic fisheries resources

AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources (WG-SP)

The annual meeting of the AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources (WG-SP) took place from 3 to 5 October 2012, kindly hosted by the Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia (Ljubljana). The meeting was attended by researchers from the Adriatic fisheries research institutes involved in the Project and members from the AdriaMed networks. The meeting reviewed the knowledge and information on small pelagic fish stocks, mainly of anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) and sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*). The stock assessments of anchovy and sardine were jointly performed for GSA 17 by combining all data made available by the experts of the participating countries. The WG also reviewed the outcomes of the Study Group on DEPM (SG-DEPM) and the Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading (SG-OTH). The preliminary results of the joint acoustic and DEPM survey performed in GSA 18 under the umbrella of AdriaMed were discussed as well. Possible future activities were identified including those concerning the Coordinating Team on echo surveys (e.g. the adherence to the EU MEDIAS programme), the activities of the SG-DEPM and SG-OTH as well as joint research activities to be carried out in the Adriatic Sea. The results of the joint stock assessment of anchovy and sardine for GSA 17 and GSA 18, were presented and discussed during the GFCM SAC- SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment on Small Pelagic Species (Split, Croatia, 5-9 November 2012), (CC/14/info3 and CC/14/info4).

Joint acoustic and ichthyoplankton survey in the South Adriatic Sea (GSA 18)

The Project continued to support the countries in developing expertise on small pelagic fisheries resources as well as for the standardization of the methodologies applied. In July – August 2012, a joint acoustic and ichthyoplankton survey using R/V "Dallaporta" covering South Adriatic waters (GSA18) was organized and supported by the Project, in cooperation with CNR-ISMAR Ancona), the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (Montenegro) and the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Durres Agricultural University of Tirana (Albania). Theoretical and onboard training activities on acoustic survey and DEPM method were carried out for national staff from Albania and Montenegro (CC/14/info8).

Study Group on DEPM for the estimation of the spawning biomass of anchovy (SG-DEPM)

The Project continued to foster the rebuilding of the expertise on DEPM method, as requested by the participating countries in several meetings and Coordination Committees. Following the indication provided by the first Study Group on DEPM for the estimation of the spawning biomass of anchovy (Split, Croatia, 10-14 January 2012) and following the proposal adopted by the 13 Coordination Committee meeting, AdriaMed organized two meetings of the SG-DEPM aimed at revising the DEPM protocol used and improving the accuracy of staging (eggs, larvae and postlarvae).,.

One SG-DEPM meeting was held in Ancona (Italy 5-6 June 2012) and a second meeting was held in Ljubljana, 1-2 October 2012. During the meetings agreement was found on the aging of Post Ovulatory Follicles (POFs) and a small Atlas have been produced for record. The SG-DEPM agreed to revise, in the light of the ageing exercise done, the ageing of postovulatory follicles (POFs) in samples collected since 2005. Moreover the SG-DEPM agreed to revise

the DEPM approach used for the estimation of spawning biomass for data collected in 2010 and 2011. A revised estimation of anchovy biomass, by using 2010 data, was then performed and presented at the GFCM- SAC –SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment on Small Pelagic Species (Split, Croatia, 5-9 November 2012) (CC/14/info10; CC/14/info11).

Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading (SG-OTH)

In the framework of the activities focused on small pelagic fisheries resources, aiming at the standardization of data collection and data analysis (statistical data collection, biological sampling, age determination, etc.), the Project organized and held the Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading in Ancona, Italy 4-5 June 2012. The meeting, which was focused on anchovy, is part of annual programme that foresees intercalibration exercise and exchange of otoliths alternating anchovy and sardine year by year. The SG-OTH was organized in two moments: a plenary discussion on projected otolith images was undertaken before the reading exercise. The meeting reviewed the age reading criteria adopted for anchovy in the sub-region and proposed measures to improve quality and accuracy of the biological data collected (CC/14/info7). In addition as outcome of the procedure established, an otoliths exchange exercise for sardine (*Sardina piclhardus*) otoliths was initiated among the Adriatic research institutes. The exercise outcomes will constitute the basis for the discussion of the next SG-OTH.

Coordinated Team on echo-survey

As follow up of the AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources (Ancona, Italy, 15th - 19th May 2006) and the following Coordination Committee the Project established a Coordinated Team on echo-survey in the Adriatic Sea (CT-ECHO) in 2007. The aim was to discuss on the standardisation of the methodologies/scientific protocol adopted by the countries in the Adriatic Sea for the evaluation of small pelagic fisheries resources (GCP/RER/010/ITA/OM-157). The activities of the CT-ECHO, were further supported and a document entitled “Towards the assessment of small pelagic fish abundance in the entire Adriatic sea means of acoustic methodology” was presented at the GFCM SAC- Working Group on Small Pelagic Species (Greece, October 2011). In order to define synergies with the EU Pan Mediterranean pelagic survey “MEDIAS” (Mediterranean Acoustic Surveys) launched for the creation of a coordinated acoustic survey on small pelagic species in the Mediterranean, the participation of one expert to the annual EU MEDIAS Coordination meeting (Malta, 20-22 March 2012) was supported.

Monitoring system for the fisheries sector in Montenegro

The Project further supported the activity started in 2007 and designed to implement a monitoring system for the Montenegrin fishery sector. The monitoring activity was carried out in cooperation with the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor and the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Management (Fisheries Directorate). The monitoring has been developed in coherence with the indications given by the GFCM and according to the EU regulations, bearing in mind the existing monitoring practice and the data collected in the country. The data collection started in September 2007 and is currently on-going. The activity at present is the only catch/effort survey in place in the country. Synergies were found with the "EC funded IPA Project on the sustainable development of the fisheries sector of Montenegro" (Europeaid/128947/C/SER/ME), supported by the European Delegation in Montenegro, to elaborate a draft porposal for fisheries management plans in the country. The preliminary results of a document summarizing the first three years of this monitoring were presented during the AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries (Italy, September 2012).

AdriaMed Technical meeting on Small Scale Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea

In consideration of the socio-economic relevance of small-scale fisheries and of their role in the exploitation of some shared stocks, following the indication received by the Adriatic experts and by the Coordination Committee, the Project organized the AdriaMed Technical Meeting on Adriatic Sea Small-Scale Fisheries (Split, Croatia, 13-14 November 2012) ten years after the first meeting held in the same place in 2003.

The Technical Consultation reviewed, on the basis of participants' experience, the current knowledge and the status of small-scale fisheries in Adriatic countries, existing monitoring systems, available scientific and technical knowledge in each country, on-going programs focusing on small-scale fisheries. In particular, species whose stocks are shared and small scale fishing gears exploiting these species were dealt with. Needs and priorities were identified and the basis was established for cooperative future work either within AdriaMed or other contexts. The proposal to re-establish the Working Group on Small Scale Fisheries was formulated. The proceedings of the Technical meeting with the documents presented will be available in the technical document to be issued shortly by AdriaMed (CC/14/info13).

Training sessions

The Project continues to improve national capacity at institutional level by organizing training activities according to the requests formulated by the participating countries. Moreover the Project in cooperation with the other FAO Mediterranean Project is seeking synergies on common activities. In this context the following training activities have been carried out and/or supported:

- Training on pseudo-cohort analysis for trawl survey data during the Study Group on GSA 18
- Training on board during the MEDITS survey in Albania (July 2012)
- Training on the use of ATrIS (September/October 2012)
- Training on board on eggs and larvae survey data collection (GSA 18, July-August 2012)
- Training ad hoc on age based models and analyses of survey data (Croatia, 28 January -1 February 2013)

- GFCM Training workshop on age reading of elasmobranchs in the GFCM area, 8-12October 2012 Antalya, Turkey
- GFCM/CopeMedII Workshop on Mediterranean gears, fishing technology and selectivity, 26-30 November 2012 Tangier, Morocco

3. Identification of management schemes to be applied on a pilot scale in selected zones with the aim of strengthening the international and regional cooperation

According to its mandate and the objective to provide technical advice for fisheries management decisions at national and sub-regional levels through joint analysis of common issues, joint technical meetings and activities, as well as by the indication provided by the FAO Independent External Evaluation of the Project (June 2012), the Project continued in its pilot approach through multilevel consultations (fisheries administration and research institutions) toward the support in the identification of ways and means to elaborate possible management options to be adopted in the Adriatic Sea. In the intersessional period the attention was mainly dedicated to the small pelagic fisheries and the Pomo/Jabuka fishing grounds.
To this extend transitional consultative meetings have been organized on these issues.
An *ad hoc* meeting on the Jabuka/Pomo Pit was held at the FAO-HQ, Rome o the 10th July 2012 with representatives of fisheries administrations and research institutions from Croatia and Italy. The main objective of the meeting was to facilitate the discussion on the feasibility of creating a protected zone in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit area and identify some possible steps to progress towards this direction. Some steps at a short-term level were identified (CC/14/info15).
An ad hoc meeting on fisheries management plans in the North Adriatic Sea was organized and held at the FAO-HQ, Rome on the 22nd January 2013. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Fisheries Administrations and Fisheries Research Institutions from Croatia, Italy and Slovenia and by the AdriaMed Project staff. The meeting aimed at facilitate the adoption of a set of common rules within the national management plans for the fisheries exploiting shared small pelagic fish in the North Adriatic Sea (GSA 17). Particular attention was paid to the technical aspects of purse seines used to exploit small pelagics in the GSA 17 and to the related European Council Regulation No 1967/2006. The meeting was considered informal and served to exchange information and opinions and agree in principle on a series of further steps towards the harmonization of the management of small pelagic fisheries resources in Northern and Central Adriatic (CC/14/info14).

Strengthening the cooperation with the GFCM and other FAO Regional Projects

In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation the Project interacts closely with the FAO Regional Project MedSudMed "Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily", with support provided on administrative matters, information technology and Web-site building, as well as other technical issues. In addition, several meetings of coordination were held with the other regional projects, CopeMed II, and EastMed throughout the year (the lasts being on 19 February 2013) in order to consolidate and envisage common activities. In this respect the Project also participated to

in the Coordination Committee of CopeMed II (May 2012, March 2013), EastMed (April 2012) and MedSudMed (March 2012), were synergies were identified. The cooperation with "MedSea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedSea-LME)" Project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)" on topics of common interest, was also sought.
A common leaflet describing the objectives of the FAO Mediterranean Projects, including AdriaMed, was prepared and distributed in occasion of the 30th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI, Rome Italy 9-13 July 2012) and other international meetings.

Cooperation was further sustained with the GFCM and the GFCM Subsidiary Bodies. Several informal meetings of coordination were held with the GFCM staff back to back GFCM events, in order to strengthen the cooperation and to find synergies. In addition the following official meetings were held:

- Coordination meeting between GFCM and FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects (Rome, 21 September 2012) to discuss the contribution of the Project in the GFCM Framework Programme (2013-2018),
- Implementation of the GFCM First Strategic Framework Programme (2013-2018) – preparatory meeting (Rome, 6-7 December 2012);
- Preparatory meeting with GFCM CAQ on the pilot action on indicators on aquaculture planned for the Montenegro (16 January 2013)

AdriaMed continued to support the activities of the GFCM by providing scientific contributions for discussion and by funding the participation of 28 Adriatic experts in the following 9 GFCM meetings (both SAC and CAQ related; (CC/14/info17) held in the intersessional period:

- Final meeting for the validation of the outcomes emerged in the framework of the Task Force Marrakech, Morocco 11-12 May 2012
- General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean - 36th Session Marrakech, Morocco 14-19 May 2012
- Training workshop on age reading of elasmobranchs in the GFCM area - Antalya, Turkey 8-12 October 2012
- SCSA Working Group on Small Pelagic Species - Split, Croatia 5-9 November 2012
- SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species - Split, Croatia 5-9 November 2012
- GFCM/CopeMed II Workshop on Mediterranean gears, fishing technology and selectivity - Tangier, Morocco 26-30 November 2012
- GFCM SAC-SCMEE First meeting of the Concerted Action for Lebanon - Rome, Italy 3-4 December 2012
- GFCM SAC Sub-Committees FAO HQs, Rome, Italy 18-20 February 2012
- GFCM Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) - 8th Session (including SIPAM) - Paris, France 13-15 March 2013

4. Supporting shared resource management decisions, including promotion of harmonized fisheries legislation

In 2003 the Project started to collect updated information on the legislation on fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (up to September 2004) in cooperation with the administrations of the countries involved. The information was published as AdriaMed Technical Document N.14 and made available online on the AdriaMed web site. In 2007 an updated version of the AdriaMed Technical Document N.14 (rev.1) was produced. A further update of the information on the legislative framework in the Adriatic countries is ongoing.

5. Supporting the development of responsible mariculture, in particular for the enhancement of positive interaction between fisheries and aquaculture

The Project supported the participation of several Adriatic experts in a number of GFCM - CAQ related meetings.

The Project continued providing technical support to the countries. In particular, support was provided to the Directorate of Fisheries Policies of Albania to continue to collect data on production and consolidate the data on the aquaculture facilities in the country. This activity was in accordance with the recommendation GFCM/2009/33/4 (17-19 December 2008, Tirana, Albania), with the need to standardize the collection of production statistics data on aquaculture, and followed the request formulated by the Directorate itself ..

In addition, preliminary meetings with GFCM CAQ staff and the Director of the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (IBMK, Montenegro) were held in order to find synergies and avoid overlap in the pilot study that will be planned in Montenegro within the GFCM-CAQ-InDAM Project (*Indicators for Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Guidelines for their use in the Mediterranean*). The pilot action will mainly aim at the production of sets of indicators and relative reference points and standards to guide evaluate and provide incentives towards the sustainable development of aquaculture.

Project Future implementation

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

The Project has been operative since October 1999 with an initial mandate of 5 years (AdriaMed I phase). During the 5th AdriaMed Coordination Committee meeting (2003), the Committee reviewed the conclusions and recommendations made by the Project Mid-term Review and recommended a five-year extension period from 2005 to 2010 (AdriaMed II phase). In the last Coordination Committee meeting (Albania, March 2012), the Italian donor confirmed the extension of its financial support to the Project activities for 2013. An additional project proposal has been sent to the EC-DGMARE for funds up to January 2014. Therefore this workplan covers approximately 12 months of activities.
The activities proposed in this document take into account the objectives and results achieved so far, the recommendations received during the 13th Coordination Committee meeting (March 2012, Tirana, Albania), as well as the scientific cooperation established within the framework of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the indications collected from the countries during the year.

In addition some of the activities take stocks of the indication provided by the FAO External Evaluation of the Project carried out in March-June 2012 by an independent team of FAO.

All the activities planned are integrated and will contribute to the development of the newly established GFCM Framework Programme (2013-2018), and in particular to the Work Programmes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The final work plan will take into due account the recommendations of the 14th Coordination Committee meeting, in accordance with the priority expressed by the countries on each activity and directly linked to the budget availability of the Project.

WORKPLAN

In order to facilitate the presentation of the workplan for the next 12 months, all the activities were organized into the following main themes:

- Fisheries Resources
- Training activities
- Socio-Economic aspects
- Statistics and Information System
- Fisheries management
- Aquaculture
- Regional Cooperation

Moreover, efforts have been made, in coordination with the participating countries, all the Mediterranean FAO Regional Projects and the GFCM, to draft a tentative common calendar of the activities, in order to avoid any overlap, to find synergies and strengthen the coordination among the activities carried out.

Fisheries Resources

Small pelagic fisheries resources

Coordinating Team on Echo Survey

The activities of the AdriaMed Coordinating Team on echo survey in the Adriatic Sea (CTE), whose work began in 2007, will be further supported. The CTE aims, among other things, to: i) identify possible steps to complete the harmonization of the acoustic surveys in the North and Central Adriatic Sea and to plan the joint data analysis session; ii) identify training needs for the experts of the sub-region or to rebuild the expertise in the area; iii) identify synergies with the established European Commission initiative "MEDIAS" (MEDiterranean International Acoustic Surveys) launched in the framework of the Data Collection for the creation of a coordinated acoustic survey on small pelagic species in the Mediterranean. In addition, the possibility to prepare common maps summarizing the distribution of small pelagic fisheries resources in the Adriatic Sea by using all the acoustic data available will be investigated.

Joint surveys using acoustic methods and DEPM in the South Adriatic Sea

A joint acoustic and DEPM (Daily Eggs Production Method) survey using R/V "Dalla Porta" covering South Adriatic waters (GSA18) is being organized for July 2013. The survey will replicate the survey carried out annually since 2008 in cooperation with the CNR-ISMAR of Ancona (Italy). The Institutes involved are the CNR-ISMAR of Ancona, the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (Montenegro) and the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Durres (Albania). Theoretical and onboard training activities will be carried out during the acoustic and DEPM survey for national staff from Albania, Italy and Montenegro.

AdriaMed Study Group on DEPM (SG-DEPM)

The Project will continue to foster the rebuilding and further development of the expertise on DEPM, as requested by the participating countries in several technical meetings and Coordination Committees. Following the results of the AdriaMed Study Group on DEPM for the estimation of the spawning biomass of anchovy (Ljubljana, Slovenia, October 2012), the need to progress in the standardization of the protocols used was defined as priority. The Project is planning a meeting of the Study Group to focus specifically on larvae/postlarvae ageing in order to eliminate possible uncertainties and misinterpretation related to inaccuracy in the ageing process. In addition, the meeting will address the revision of the analysis carried out for 2011 and 2012 survey data. The meeting will be divided in two sessions: on-the-job training, and discussion and data analysis. The Project will facilitate and support the participation of an international expert to the meeting of the SG-DEPM.

AdriaMed Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading (SG-OTH)
The Project will continue to support participating countries in the process of standardization of data collection and analysis. Following the outcomes of the AdriaMed Workshop on intercalibration of anchovy otolith reading (Ancona, Italy, 4- 5 June 2012), the experts proposed that the next Study Group meeting should be focused to the sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) otolith reading. In addition, the SG-OTH should progress, under the supervision of the Project, in the preparation of a photographic atlas of otoliths. The aim of the Study Group, in the long term, will be to develop a standard for the sub-region and to set a periodical monitoring of the "reading" activities by establishing a regular exchange of otoliths among the Adriatic research institutes. The next SG-OTH will be organized in two moments: an on-the-job session and a plenary session for discussion. The meeting is foreseen to take place in June/July 2013.

Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources (WG-SP)
The annual AdriaMed Working Group (WG) on Small Pelagic Fishery Resources is tentatively planned to take place in the second semester of 2013, and according to the time schedule of the GFCM SAC Working Group on Small Pelagic Species. The meeting aims are to discuss the progress made on monitoring activities with particular attention to the Study Group on DEPM, the Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading and the Coordinating Team on Echo Survey. The organization of joint surveys in the Adriatic Sea will be dealt with as well as common research activities. The WG will continue to further progress in the standardization process of research methodologies with particular attention to estimation of the length at first maturity for fishery target species and to the agreement of a common sexual maturity scale for small pelagic fish in the Adriatic Sea. In addition, the WG will address the training needs, the joint assessment of small pelagic species for both GSA 17 and GSA 18 and the request made by the GFCM SAC.

Demersal fisheries resources

Joint biological monitoring of demersal stocks in the Adriatic
The project will continue in supporting the process of standardization of sampling methodologies and monitoring, and appraisal of demersal stocks (also depending on budget availability) by providing support to the research institutes and by supporting the participation of national experts in international surveys carried out in the Adriatic Sea (e.g. MEDITS survey). In addition, the possibility to continue to support the analysis of data gathered during the UnderWater TV (UWTV) survey carried out in the Central Adriatic Sea (mainly in the Jabuka/Pomo Pits) will be explored.

***Solea solea* related activities**
In the framework of the activities related to Demersal Fisheries Resources, the Project will continue to support the research programme "Stock Assessment of *Solea solea* in the northern and central Adriatic Sea and evaluation of the impact of the different fishing activities" (SoleMon), in GSA 17. To this extent, the research institutes from Croatia, Italy and Slovenia will be involved. The Project will support the organization of a meeting for the joint analysis of the data collected in 2012. The meeting is tentatively scheduled in the first

semester of 2013. The meeting will also tentatively address the results of the SoleDiff project aimed at the assessment genetic differentiation of *Solea solea* and *S. aegyptiaca* and population structure of the common sole in northern Adriatic Sea. The annual SoleMon survey will take place in November 2013.

Study Group on GSA 17 and GSA 18

As for 2011 and 2012, the Project will continue to support the organization of the Study Group on GSA 18 for the application of bottom-trawl survey data and fishery commercial data to fish stock assessment in South Adriatic Sea (GSA 18) in support to the work of the Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG-DEM). A similar Study Group will be organized also for GSA 17. Both the meetings will be organized before the next WG-DEM (or back to back with it), in order to provide the WG of the preliminary information on stock assessment.

Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG-DEM)

The annual AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG-DEM) will be organized to discuss the progress made on monitoring activities in the Adriatic area, paying particular attention to a) the request from the GFCM-SAC to provide sub-regional stock assessment on priority species; b) the development of indicators and reference points for fisheries management which may be considered at regional level in line with the EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive in the Adriatic Sea; and c) the training needs. During the WG, the outcomes of the Study Groups on GSA 18 and GSA 17 will be discussed and joint analysis of data is foreseen to take place. The WG is scheduled to take place during the second semester of 2013.

Review of the current knowledge on shared demersal resources stocks of the Adriatic Sea

The Project initiated the process of updating the information included in the AdriaMed Technical Document N. 8 "Review of current knowledge on shared demersal stocks of the Adriatic Sea" published in 2004. The finalization and publishing of the document is foreseen for 2013.

Training activities

Some training activities will be organized further to specific requests formulated by the Adriatic experts during the past years and also raised during the recent AdriaMed Working Groups (September and October 2012). In particular:

Training activities on small pelagic fisheries resources direct appraisal methods (Echo survey and DEPM)

The Project will continue to provide assistance for theoretical and onboard training activities for national staff during the acoustic surveys on R/V DALLA PORTA foreseen in Summer 2013. The aim is to create a sub-regional, cooperative working team on echosurvey. Moreover by taking advantage of the concurrent DEPM survey, on-the-job training on Daily Eggs Production Method will be provided as well.

Training course on stock assessment methods
A general need for training on stock assessment, basic and advanced level, has been indicated in several occasions to the Project. The possibility of having training sessions prepared by the Project or to take advantage of training session organized by other FAO Mediterranean Projects in the ambit of the GFCM Framework Programme will be investigated.

In addition a specific training course on fishery statistics and parameterization will be tentatively organized by the Project.

Socio-economic aspects

Technical support
Technical support will continue to be provided to the participating countries for the GFCM Task 1, in particular for the fulfilment of the GFCM data Task 1.3 (according to the Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3).

Socio-economic survey in Albania
Following a request from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Management, Directorate of Fisheries Policies of Albania, the Project is organizing a socio-economic data collection programme in Albania. The data collection is aimed at contributing to the national capacity development through the establishment of the basis for a multi-disciplinary fishery monitoring system. Overall, this activity will contribute to provide the tools for planning and managing national capture fisheries and will support the country to be consistent with the GFCM recommendation on data collection (namely Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3).

Review on the fisheries legislation
The Project will continue to assist participating countries in updating/amending their fisheries and aquaculture national legislation in order to contribute to their harmonization and consistence with the GFCM resolutions, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible fisheries and other international conventions/agreements and principles.

The Project will continue to update and make available the compendium of the current fisheries legislation in each participating country. The compendium is meant to be a tool for the fishery administrations to improve understanding of fisheries legislation on marine fisheries management in the Adriatic Sea. In 2003 the Project started to collect updated information on the legislation on fisheries in the Adriatic Sea (up to September 2004) in cooperation with the administrations of the countries involved[1]. In 2007 an updated version of the AdriaMed Technical Document N.14 (rev.2) was produced. The Project initiated the updating of the information on the legislative framework in the Adriatic countries through the pubblication of specific revised technical document. The finalization of the document is foreseen for the end of 2013.

[1] AdriaMed. 2008. General outline of marine capture fisheries legislation and regulations in the Adriatic Sea countries. AdriaMed Technical Documents, 14 (rev.2). 2008. 68pp

Statistics and Information Systems

Technical Support

Technical support will continue to be provided to the participating countries for the creation and updating of databases, Web pages and national information systems as in the past years.
In addition, the Project will continue to support the national fisheries statistics systems in eastern Adriatic countries (Albania and Montenegro). Support to fisheries data collection, potentially using the tools developed by the FAO Project MedFisis[2] and in accordance to the GFCM requirements is planned. The activities will be coordinated with those foreseen in the GFCM Framework Programme.

Monitoring system for the fishery sector in Montenegro

The Project will continue to support the collection of bio-economic fisheries data in Montenegro, throughout 2013. The data collected until 2011 have been used to draft a proposal for a fisheries management plan in Montenegro by the "EC funded IPA Project on the sustainable development of the fisheries sector of Montenegro". AdriaMed will follow up with the activity in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Montenegro.

Monitoring system for the fishery sector in Albania

Following the indication collected during the AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (Fano, Italy, September 2012) regarding the importance to have fishery dependent data for fishery monitoring purpose the Project will investigate the possibility to support such a data collection in Albania. on this regard, AdriaMed is organizing, in cooperation with the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Durrës (Albania), a pilot action to be conducted in the port of Durrës. The pilot action is aimed at supporting the collection of data on commercial fisheries useful for the appraisal of the resources.

AdriaMed Trawl Survey Information Systems (ATrIS)

ATrIS, the computerized system developed to organize, store and undertake the preliminary analysis of the dataset collected during the trawl surveys will be further upgraded. Particular attention will be paid to reflect the modification of the new MEDITS protocol in the application. Support to the research institutes on the use and/or development of special/new features of ATrIS is foreseen (e.g. as that specifically requested by the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Durres).
In addition, following the request of some participating institutions, *ad hoc* specific training course on the better use of tools included in ATrIS will be organized.

Database for small pelagic data

Following the recommendations of the 11th Coordination Committee (Montenegro, March 2010) and the discussion held during the annual Working Group of Small Pelagics (October 2010 and 2011), on the basis of the experienced gained through the preparation of ATrIS, the Project will finalise the work commenced to design and develop a database to store, manage and making preliminary analysis of small pelagic data.

[2] FAO Project MedFisis: Fishery Statistics and Information System in the Mediterranean, 2004-2011

Collaboration between AdriaMed and ASFA

The activities carried out so far to include Adriatic scientific publications in the ASFA database will continue. Furthermore, support to the Croatian national collaborating centre for AdriaMed-ASFA (IOF-Split) and the Montenegrin ASFA data entry centre (IMBK-Kotor) will be provided. In addition, the Project will continue to provide assistance to the FAO ASFA Secretariat (and in particular to the ASFA National Partner of Egypt).

AdriaMed Web site

The contents of the AdriaMed portal (www.faoadriamed.org), will be updated and reorganized based on the on main Project components and areas of activity to group information according more logical and easy accessible areas of interest to website users. Following the reorganization of the AdriaMed portal there will be need to create new thematic sections, according to the new structure, which will focus on specific subjects e.g. small pelagic fisheries resources; socio-economic indicators.

In addition, following the request of the AdriaMed technical meeting on small scale fisheries (Croatia, November 2012) the Project will support the development of a database holding information on the new species (mainly lessepsian species) recorded in the Adriatic Sea. The database will be made available on the AdriaMed website.

Fisheries management

Indicators

Following the work carried out so far by the Project on indicators, considering the interest expressed by the Working Group of Demersal Fisheries Resources (Fano, Italy, September 2012), the EC Directive on Marine Strategy Framework, and the use of indicators proposed during the 13th session of the GFCM SAC, the Project is investigating the possibility to organize a meeting to further progress on indicators. In this regard, the EC framework and the criteria and methodological standards to be applied for good environmental status will be taken into due consideration.

Working group on Small Scale Fisheries (WG-SSF)

Following the outcomes of the AdriaMed Technical meeting on Adriatic Sea Small-scale Fisheries (Split, Croatia, 13th – 14th November 2012), the Project will re-establish the transversal expert meeting on small scale fisheries, namely the Working Group on Small scale fisheries. The WG-SSF will strongly cooperate and take advantage of the already established AdriaMed Working Groups on Fisheries Resources (both Demersal and Small Pelagic). This could facilitate the work of the new WG-SSF and could support in addressing issues like the conflicts or interactions among small scale and industrial fisheries. During the first meeting of the WG-SSF participants: i) will review the inventory list of all the data on SSF available at national level; ii) will identify and compile the list of species on which focus the future common analysis; and iii) will progress in the definition of a pilot study focusing on trammel nets and gillnets. The Project will circulate a common template for the collection of relevant data in the intersessional period. Next meeting of the WG-SSF is tentatively planned back to back to the Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources meeting. Synergies with the GFCM Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences will be foreseen

on this matter. The WG-SSF meeting will be tentatively organized before the GFCM Workshop on Small Scale Fisheries (September 2013) in order to provide solid contribution to the GFCM Workshop.

Support for fisheries management plans

The Project will continue to provide, at the request of the country concerned, assistance in the harmonization of existing fisheries management schemes at national and sub-regional levels, including related regulatory measures and, when required, to test their effectiveness. The development of this activity follows the indication provided so far to the Project on the need to tackle fisheries management issues as also indicated by the latest FAO External Project Evaluation. In the process, design the necessary methodologies to test and adjust plans with emphasis being put on their possible replication in other zones will be supported. The possibility to continue to facilitate the discussion on management focusing on the North Adriatic Sea (GSA 17) and Central Adriatic Sea (e.g. Jabuka Pomo Pit) will be investigated, as well as the issue related to the management of the small pelagic fisheries in the whole Adriatic.

In addition, following the requests received by the Project in several occasions, and the indication provided by the FAO External evaluation of the Project, AdriaMed will facilitate the organization of meetings to bring together scientists, government representatives, and representatives of fishing sector to discuss the situation of fisheries and review the state of the main bio-economic fishery indicators, their trends and their possible impact on the management of these fisheries. Synergies with the GFCM Framework Programme (2013-2018), which will be the final forum for the discussion and adoption of any international management plan, will be sought, to optimise resources and avoiding overlapping and duplications.

Aquaculture

Production statistics data on aquaculture

In accordance with the recommendation GFCM/2009/33/4 on the need to standardize the collection of statistics data on aquaculture production, following the request formulated by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Management, Directorate of Fisheries Policies of Albania, and the indication given during the 10th Coordination Committee, the Project foresees the publication of the results of the census of aquaculture facilities carried out in 2011 in the country. The Project will continue to support the Adriatic countries, upon request, for the collection of data on aquaculture consistent with the GFCM guidelines and in supporting pilot studies on the interactions between capture fisheries and aquaculture.

Support to identification of indicators for sustainable development of aquaculture

In accordance with the request of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (Montenegro), the Project held consultative meetings with the GFCM-CAQ-InDAM Project (Indicators for Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Guidelines for their use in the Mediterranean). The objective of the meetings was to indentify synergies on the pilot action on indicators on aquaculture that will take place in Montenegro in 2013. As follow up, the Project will facilitate the development of a participatory and

multidisciplinary approach that, in the medium term, will provide both policy makers and relevant stakeholders with the appropriate support tools for decision making on sustainable aquaculture development. In this view, further cooperation with the INDAM Project will be sought.

Centre for the Conservation of Marine Biodiversity at the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor

The Project foresees to support the programme of the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor which leads to the future realization of a Centre for the Conservation of Marine Biodiversity in Montenegro. This activity follows the information provided by the delegated from Montenegro during the session of the GFCM-CAQ (December 2008, Tirana) about a programme of the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor. The centre will support activities of restocking for stock enhancement, research and didactic activities in the coastal areas.

Regional Cooperation

Strengthening the cooperation with the GFCM

In line with previous decisions of the Coordination Committees and with the recommendations sorting out from the Independent Evaluation study carried out in 2012, the Project will continue to strengthen international and regional cooperation at Mediterranean level with the GFCM and its related bodies (SAC, SubCommittees, Working Groups, CAQ) through: i) the preparation of scientific contributions for GFCM events; ii) the participation of experts from the AdriaMed countries in GFCM events; and iii) support to the countries to be compliant with the GFCM requests. Moreover the project will act in synergy with, and will be part of, the new GFCM proposed framework programme for 2013-2018. In this view, with the overall purpose to take the best possible advantage of expertise available at sub-regional level, lessons learnt and overall resources, interactions with the GFCM will be further strengthened.

Strengthening the cooperation with the other FAO Mediterranean Projects and other initiatives in the region

The existing cooperation with other FAO Regional Projects (RP) such as the MedSudMed Project will continue and further collaboration with CopeMed II, and EastMed will be sought. In this context, synergies are foreseen with other regional Projects, also taking into consideration the indications provided during the internal coordination meeting among the Projects (Rome, January 2013). Areas of cooperation have been indicated for surveys at sea and socio-economic aspects of fisheries and training. Synergies are also 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. The overall objective of such cooperation is the optimisation of ensuring the achievement of the best possible results. In this view, the sharing of resources could be foreseen as

appropriate and according to the priorities an thematic areas identified during the Project Coordination Committee.
Cooperation with international institutions or projects on topics that may be of common interest will also be sought. Synergies with other initiatives acting in the Mediterranean regarding fishery subjects of interest for the Adriatic region will be sought for the sake of avoiding duplication of efforts and optimizing the use of human and financial resources.

Training activities will be coordinated among all the Projects, in order to avoid duplication or overlapping. The participation of other Regional Projects experts in training courses organized by AdriaMed will be foreseen as well as the contrary.
The preparation of common informative material (leaflets, CD-rom, etc.) that can improve the visibility of the RPs in the Mediterranean area and in the international context is foreseen.
Moreover, the Project will participate in the Coordination Committees of EastMed and MedSudMed (April 2013) where additional synergies will be identified.

Annex E

FAO implemented projects in the Adriatic and Straits of Sicily: GCP /RER/010/ITA AdriaMed and MedSudMed; GCP /RER/021/EC and GDCP/INT/010/ITA

Evaluation report (June 2012)

(This report is available in electronic format at: http://www.fao.org/evaluation)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

This report is available in electronic format at: http://www.fao.org/evaluation

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Acknowledgements

The Evaluation team marks its appreciation for the collaboration received by all involved persons and institutions, in FAO HQ, in the visited countries and those attending the same meetings as the Evaluation, in providing information, documentation, in responding to interviews and in removing any possible obstacle or constraint.

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Acronyms

AdriaMed	Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible fisheries in the Adriatic Sea, GCP/RER/010/ITA
ATrIS	AdriaMed Trawl Survey Information System
BH	Budget Holder
CAQ	Committee on Aquaculture of the GFCM
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser – Project Coordinator
EAF	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
EC	European Community
EOD	Entry On Duty – Beginning Date
FIR	Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division, Fisheries Dept., FAO
FIRF	Marine and Inland Fisheries Group, (FIR Division, Fisheries Dept., FAO
FPMIS	Field Project Management Information System
FWP	GFCM Framework Programme
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
GSA	GFCM Geographical Sub Area
IAMC-CNR	Istituto per lo studio dell'Ambiente Marino Costiero, Italy
INSTM	Institut National des Sciences & Technologies de la Mer, Tunisia
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LTO/U	Lead Technical Officer/Unit
MedSudMed	Assessment and Monitoring of the Fisheries Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily, GCP /RER/010/ITA
MBRC	Marine Biology Research Centre of Tajura, Lybia
MIPAAF	Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies
MRRA	Agriculture and Fisheries Regulation Department, Malta
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NTE	Not-To-Exceed – End Date
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
OPS	Operations Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
ProDoc	Project Document
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee (GFCM)
USD	United States Dollar

Executive Summary

ES1. In the Adriatic Sea and the south-central Mediterranean most of the fisheries resources are shared and their trans-boundary nature justifies harmonised scientific and management approaches. In these regions several fish stocks appear to be under significant fishing pressure.

ES2. Since 1999, within the framework of its agreement with the Government of Italy and upon request from the participating governments through the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), FAO has been collaborating with the riverine countries in the Adriatic Sea and in the Straits of Sicily to enhance scientific collaboration for the improvement of sustainable management of the fish stocks. During this period, a total of four projects have been funded from different partners, as follows.

ES3. The AdriaMed project 'Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea- GCP/RER/010/ITA', has been funded by the Government of Italy through the MIPAAF over the period 1999-2012 through two phases. Participating countries since its start are the Republics of Albania, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and Montenegro. This initiative was complemented in 2011-2012 by GCP/RER/021/EC, funded by the European Commission. Total funds allocated to this project amounted to almost USD 8.5 millions.

ES4. The MedSudMed project 'Assessment and monitoring of the fisheries resources and the ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily, 2001-2012 - GCP/RER/010/ITA'. This initiative has been financed by the Government of Italy through the MIPAAF and was complemented in 2011-2012 by the Regione Siciliana-funded initiative 'The role of the crustaceans as fisheries resources in the south-central Mediterranean - GDCP/INT/010/ITA'. Participating countries are Italy, Lybia, Malta and Tunisia. Total funds allocated to these projects amounted to almost USD 5.7 millions.

ES5. The objective of the final evaluation of these projects was to provide accountability to the participating Member Countries and resource partners on the extent of Projects' results and to draw lessons and formulate recommendations for the potential future role and strategies of the Projects. Evaluation steps included:

- Documents review and analysis (previous reviews, projects technical documents, GFCM documents);
- Meetings of the Evaluation team with FAO administrative officers, project staff, the Executive Secretary of the GFCM and OED;
- Participation in the 2012 Coordination Committee meetings of the projects;
- Participation of the Evaluation Team Leader in other meetings of the GFCM in the period April-May 2012, further canvassing the views of Member Countries.

ES6. The team received very good collaboration from scientific and administrative key stakeholders in providing information, documentation, in responding to interviews and in removing any possible obstacle or constraint.

ES7. The Projects aimed at achieving a homogeneous level of research that would allow undertaking ecosystem–oriented activities and setting-up common fisheries management tools at sub regional level for the sustainable management of shared stocks. These objectives were based on the identification of priority research topics and training requirements

according to the needs of the National Fisheries Departments in the AdriaMed countries, the National Research Institutions in the MedSudMed countries, as well as at the level of GFCM to fill some gaps in scientific knowledge. Projects activities were organized on the basis of on-going national programmes, taking advantage of existing national activities and supporting data collection in areas that were not covered by the national surveys.

ES8. The Evaluation found strong evidence that the projects had been well managed and their strategies had been consistent with the expressed requirements of the participating countries; ad hoc training courses organized and run by the Projects have allowed national scientists to attend the GFCM SAC working groups and Sub Committees annual meetings and led to an upgrading of the national experts on specific issues. The scientific institutions involved in the projects have developed capacity and interest to share information among them. Assistance provided by international experts resulted in innovative research activities, whose main outputs respond to the national and international objectives in the field of sustainable fisheries management.

ES9. Rates of delivery for the 2008-2011 period show a constant and well monitored fund disbursement pattern, that fully reflects the events of the projects and the action of the Project Coordinators to successfully manage problems stemming from the progressive growth of the project. All Budget Revisions stemmed from the Coordinating Committee and the Evaluation found them to be coherent with the project principles and objectives, including operational aspects. Overall, BR allowed the project to steer its implementation according to its goals, despite some important budget cuts.

ES10. The Evaluation also considered that the distribution of management and technical responsibilities was inadequate and generated confusion due to duplications of functions and formal attribution of responsibilities not coinciding with knowledge and performance. Overall FI has given so far insufficient consideration to the strategic role of the projects in the overall scenario of FAO's interventions in the region and sub-regions and their future evolution.

ES11. The Evaluation formulated the following recommendations on operational aspects:

Recommendation 1: To FIRF on project management and administration

FIRF should review and re-define areas and levels of responsibility including criteria of assignment of functions; rationalise overlapping and duplications of roles among the Lead Technical Unit, Operations and the Chief Technical Advisor.

Recommendation 2: To FIRF on project management and administration

FIRF should: a) review attribution of Budget Holder Responsibility respecting the principle of best placed knowledge-cum responsibility; and b) appoint the Alternate Budget Holder and document appointment accordingly

Recommendation 3: To the projects, on strengthening research and networks

The projects should strengthen the following areas of work:
a) improve the development and diffusion of scientific publications on activities and researches carried out within the projects, contribute to international scientific literature;
b) enhance focus on multidisciplinary research in support of fisheries management compatible with EAF, by supporting the organisation of joint cooperative research activities with common and standardised procedures and reinforcing the activities on training and human capacity development of staff of fisheries institutions;
c) enhance the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), by strengthening the capacity of the national institutions in terms of both human resources and organization, as well as direct support to the consultation process necessary for achieving this goal.

Recommendation 4: To the projects, on areas for further support

The projects should include activities aimed at:
a) increasing the understanding of the role of small-scale and recreational fisheries (including biological, technological, and socio-economic aspects) and reinforce the institutional capacity to address and manage also this component of the fisheries systems;
b) strengthening the capacity to explicitly include the interactions between capture fisheries and aquaculture in the management process;
c) reinforcing research and capacity development on the socio-economic component of fisheries, including ad hoc studies on consumer's expectations, marketing problems, eco-labelling and product certification.

ES12. The Evaluation considered that AdriaMed and MedSudMed were on the way to soon reach the final goal of formulating harmonized fisheries management strategies for several important shared resources and to propose some important multinational recommendations aimed at their regional conservation to be proposed for adoption by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. Thus, the Evaluation wanted to underline the importance of strengthening the linkages between the Projects and GFCM priorities and processes; this could be achieved in particular by enhancing stronger concentration and focus on fewer priority objectives dealing with fisheries management and a perspective for the continuation of the sub regional projects could be to develop synergies under the umbrella of the new GFCM Framework Programme for the period 2013-2018. Recommendation 5 below was formulated in this respect.

Recommendation 5: To FI, the projects and GFCM

All parties concerned, i.e. the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, GCP/RER/010/ITA and GFCM Secretariat, should develop by end of 2012 a road-map to be proposed to partners for discussion, endorsement and funding, that would allow the integration of AdriaMed and MedSudMed achievements within the 2013-2018 GFCM Framework Programme.

1 Introduction

1.1 Evaluation background

1. The Adriatic Sea is a semi-enclosed basin and one of the largest areas of occurrence of shared stocks in the Mediterranean. Most of the pelagic and demersal fisheries resources in the basin migrate through national waters of different countries during their life cycle (e.g. juveniles that are recruited to the bottom in shallow coastal waters in the northern Adriatic, possibly move to deeper waters in the central and southern part of the basin and vice versa) and are shared between the fisheries of at least three countries. The Adriatic fishing fleets operate in national and international waters and the shared fisheries resources are exploited under different regimes in each country, while their trans-boundary nature justifies harmonised management approaches.

2. The Straits of Sicily is a large and dynamically active area connecting the eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean Sea. In this area the fishing fleet of four countries (i.e. Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia) operate continuously through the year. The zone is one of the most important fishing spots in the Mediterranean, which may be explained by the transitional nature of this area, the spatial aspects of fishery target species ecology and the morphology of the bottom, combined with the hydrological configuration enhancing biological productivity.

3. Since 1999, within the framework of its agreement with the Government of Italy and upon request from the participating governments through the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), FAO has collaborated with the riverine countries in the Adriatic Sea and in the Straits of Sicily, to improve the sustainable management of the shared fish stocks, by enhancing scientific collaboration and overall capacity on these themes. The GFCM, established within the framework of Article XIV of FAO Constitution as a Regional Fisheries Management Organization, is a key player in the management of fisheries resources in the region.

4. During this period, a total of four projects have been funded from different partners, which are briefly described here below.

AdriaMed Project - Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea - GCP/RER/010/ITA "

5. This initiative has been operational in its first phase since September 1999 till September 2005, financed by the Government of Italy through the MIPAAF. The project was extended into its current second phase (AdriaMed II) for the period 2005-2012 with the Italian MIPAAF core funding and co-funding from the European Commission in the period from April 2007 to March 2008 and for 2010-2012. AdriaMed participating countries are the Republics of Albania, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and Montenegro. Total funds allocated to this project amount to USD 8 millions.

Scientific Cooperation to support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea- AdriaMed Phase II, GCP/RER/021/EC

6. This EC contribution to the AdriaMed Project aims at building on the objectives and outputs of the first phase of the project, by consolidating and further developing the basis for establishing and implementing in each participating country and/or at multilateral level up-dated management plans for relevant specific fisheries, through coordinated scientific investigations and data-gathering, as well as through joint multidisciplinary analysis. The project was funded for 12 months duration, with a budget of USD 340,000. Its activities are fully mainstreamed within the plan of work and institutional set-up of AdriaMed.

MedSudMed Project - Assessment and monitoring of the fisheries resources and the ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily, GCP/RER/010/ITA

7. This initiative has been operational in its first phase since April 2001 till September 2006, financed by the Government of Italy through the MIPAAF. The project was then extended into its current second phase (MedSudMed II) for the period 2006-2012. Additional funds were secured to support the MedSudMed Project activities related to the crustacean resources through a contribution of the Regione Siciliana (Italy) for the period May 2011-December 2012. Total funds allocated to this project amount to USD 5.4 millions. Participating countries are Italy, Lybia, Malta and Tunisia. Main partners of the Project are the Lybian MBRC, the Tunisian INSTM, the Maltese MRRA and the Italian IAMC-CNR , Italy.

8. The project has been operational in its first phase from April 2001 until September 2006, financed by the Government of Italy through the MiPAAF. In 2005 an internal technical review of the Project was requested by the Coordination Committee. The Committee also gave indications of priority areas to be dealt with in future activities. The project was then extended into its current second phase (MedSudMed II) for the period 2006-2012. In 2009 another internal technical review given the achievements and positive results of the project and the repeated expressions of support and interest of all participating countries recommended a further extension of its support to the project.

The role of the crustaceans as fisheries resources in the south-central Mediterranean, GDCP/INT/010/ITA

9. This project was funded by the Italian Regione Siciliana through the modality of decentralized cooperation, a relatively new form of partnership that allows sub national government institutions in developed countries supporting similar entities in developing countries in the framework of the national development plans of the country concerned.

10. It aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the MedSudMed project on issues of great relevance in the south-central Mediterranean, like the execution of harmonised surveys at sea and the joint data analysis as baseline for the EAF. The project was funded for 18 months duration, with a budget of USD 262,000. Its activities are fully mainstreamed within the plan of work and institutional set-up of MedSudMed.

11. FAO Evaluation policy establishes that all projects with a budget above USD 4 million should be evaluated at least once in their lifetime. The two GCP/RER/010/ITA initiatives have been operational for more than a decade and over time, their respective budget size has reached the threshold. Hence, FAO Office of Evaluation, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and Project management and the donor agreed in mid-2011 that a

final evaluation in the first half of 2012 would contribute to take stock of achievements and challenges for both streams of work.

1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

12. The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation, included in Annex 1 of this report, stated that the objective of the final evaluation was to provide accountability to the participating Member Countries, resource partners including the Italian MIPAAF, the European Commission, the Regione Siciliana and FAO, on the extent of Projects' results, including outputs, outcomes and impacts – actual and potential - to date.

13. The Evaluation was also to draw lessons and formulate recommendations for the potential future role and strategies of the Projects, 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 Projects' continuation will also be assessed.

1.3 Evaluation methodology

14. The ToR established that the Evaluation should adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered was to be used to underpin the validation of evidence collected and its analysis and support conclusions and recommendations. Further, the Evaluation was asked to adhere to UNEG Norms and Standards[1].

15. The Evaluation process was managed by FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) in close collaboration with FIRF and the Project Management Unit. Steps were as follows:

- Documents review and analysis;
- Briefing of the Evaluation team in FAO HQ in March 2012: the team met FAO officers involved in the administrative and operation management of the projects, project staff, the Executive Secretary of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and OED. Extensive discussions were held on the evaluation purpose, scope and methodology, and on the substantive aspects of the work carried out by the projects, including administrative and operational aspects;
- Participation of the Evaluation team in the respective Coordination Committee meetings of: MedSudMed project, hold in Djerba, Tunisia on 13-15 March; and AdriaMed project, hold in Tirana, Albania 27-29 March;
- Participation of the Evaluation Team Leader in other meetings of the GFCM in the period April-May 2012, canvassing further the views of Member Countries.

16. These missions allowed to carry out interviews with projects staffs and with scientific and administrative key stakeholders from the national research institutions and governments of the countries participating in the projects. The Evaluation team also examined the previous reviews, various technical documents produced by the projects and the reports of the yearly Coordination Committees, as well as the GFCM documents stating the relationship between the FAO sub-regional projects and the GFCM.

[1] http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards

17. The final draft report will be circulated to FAO stakeholders for comments and suggestions, which the Evaluation team will integrate as appropriate.

2 Context of the project/programme

18. Due to the trans-boundary nature of the marine resources and to the dynamics of the national fisheries, the Adriatic Sea and the south-central Mediterranean are among the best areas in the Mediterranean in which to investigate and characterise the interactions between the environmental factors, fisheries and fisheries resources and the possible impact of climate on marine productivity. In these areas, the spatial and temporal dynamics of fisheries resources is linked to the oceanographic and bottom features, and the fishing fleets operate in national and international waters. The shared fisheries resources are exploited under different regimes in each country, while their trans-boundary nature justifies harmonised scientific and management approaches.

19. According to the available data, several fish stocks in the Adriatic and south-central Mediterranean regions appear to be under significant fishing pressure; a reduction of fishing effort and changing in fishing pattern was generally recommended by the GFCM in order to ensure recovery and/or sustainable exploitation of the resources.

20. Achieving the optimal use of these fisheries resources requires an effective cooperative management framework based on accepted concepts like the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF). This implies the development of capacity to cooperate for effective management of the fisheries resources in compliance with the EAF.

21. The strategy of both Projects was to establish and improve common efforts among the participating countries, thus expanding and utilizing the common knowledge which is required for the responsible management of the major living marine resources in the Project's areas.

22. The long term objective of the FAO MedSudMed and Adriamed Projects was "to establish and implement in each participating country and/or at multilateral level improved management plans for relevant specific fisheries, through coordinated scientific investigations and data gathering, as well as through joint multidisciplinary analysis". This implies in particular to increase the scientific knowledge on fisheries and their ecosystems for the implementation of the EAF at sub-regional level through research activities conducted cooperatively between the participating countries.

23. This objective was pursued in synergy between the two projects and with the FAO sub-regional project CopeMed operating in the western area of the Mediterranean, which focused mostly on supporting actual fisheries management.

3 Concept and relevance

3.1 Project design

24. The objectives of the Projects were based on the identification of priority research topics and training requirements according to the requirements of the National Fisheries Departments in the case of AdriaMed, or the National Research Institutions in the case of MedSudMed, and of the GFCM to fill some gaps in scientific knowledge, to achieve a homogeneous level of research, to undertake ecosystem–oriented activities and to set up common fisheries management tools at sub regional level for shared stocks. The projects activities were organized on the basis of on-going national programmes, taking advantage of existing national activities and supporting data collection in areas that were not covered by the national surveys.

25. The Project embodied a strategy of fostering collaboration among scientific institutions in a defined region, with the hope of raising awareness among governments of participating countries on the need to harmonise the respective policies on fisheries monitoring and management. The implicit assumption was that by jointly developing capacities of scientists, eventually thrust and collaboration would develop among respected institutions at national level that would with time lead to shared resources management. In themselves, the Project anticipated the more ambitious vision of evolution towards some form of integration of the political and socio-economic spheres.

26. The organization of Expert Consultations involving national experts from the projects areas was the starting point in the creation of sub-regional scientific networks and constituted also the initial step towards the sharing of available scientific knowledge on fisheries in the Projects areas. At the time of the Evaluation it can be said that the projects strategies have been consistent with the expressed requirements of the participating countries: by organizing ad hoc training courses and allowing the national scientists to actively participate in the GFCM SAC working groups and Sub Committees annual meetings they permitted an upgrading of the national experts on specific issues; allowing the scientific institutions involved in the projects to share information between themselves and to benefit from assistance of international experts resulted in innovative research activities which main outputs respond to the national and international objectives in the field of fisheries management.

3.2 Relevance

27. The projects are highly relevant for the development of priorities and needs of the regions, where the multi-specific fishing activity, as well as the movements of the different stocks across fishing grounds of the countries highlight the need for a close inter–country collaboration, to ensure adequate monitoring and analysis of the status of many shared stocks. This has been recognized as the only way to formulate appropriate measures for the management of fishery resources in the area.

28. In the Adriatic Sea many species migrate through national waters of different countries during their life cycle and are shared between the fisheries of several countries. Fishing, and other uses of the sea, is an important part of the economy and culture of the

countries bordering the Adriatic, but maintaining this requires an important effort for achieving a sustainable fisheries management framework that will have to be cooperative among the different countries, if it is going to be successful.
In the area covered by the MedSudmed Project several fish stocks appear to be under significant fishing pressure, so the objective of the project was to enable the fisheries institutions of the participating governments to carry out continuous dynamic assessment and monitoring of the status of the stocks of fish plus other living resources, as well as the ecosystems, so as to provide ongoing advice for appropriate rapid adjustments in their national and regional mechanisms for management of the fisheries, and so maintain fish production at an optimum level.

29. The relevance of the projects has been highly reinforced by the fact that soon after they started, the modus operandi of the GFCM changed and the Commission was empowered to adopt management decisions whose introduction in the national legislations and implementation is binding for the member countries.

4 Implementation

4.1 Budget and expenditure

30. Boxes 1 and 2 below synthesise the basic information on each project starting date, planned completion date and cumulative budgets at the time of the Evaluation

Box 1. AdriaMed projects

AdriaMed, GCP/RER/010/ITA	
EOD	15 October 1999
NTE (current)	30 June 2012*
First phase	1999-2006
Second phase	Project extension 2006-2007
Third phase	Project extension 2007-30 June 2010
Fourth phase	Project extension 1 July 2010-30 June 2012
Donor	Italy, MIPAAF
Budget USD	8,087,157
EC project – GCP /RER/021/EC	
EOD	15 April 2011
NTE (current)	14 April 2012
Donor	European Union
Budget USD	341,296

(*) Further extension announced: NTE 31 DEC 2012 with possibility of a yet further extension NTE 30 JUN 2013

Box 2. MedSudMed projects

MedSudMed, GCP/RER/010/ITA (Module 2)	
EOD	1 April 2001
NTE (current)	30 June 2012*
First phase	2001-2005
Second phase	Project extension 1 January 2006- 30 June 2012
Donor	Italy, MIPAAF
Budget USD	5,400,502
Sicily regional – GDCP /INT/010/ITA	

EOD	1 April 2001
NTE (current)	30 September 2012
Donor	Regione Siciliana
Budget USD	261,780

(*) Further extension announced: NTE 31 DEC 2012 with possibility of a yet further extension NTE 30 JUN 2013

31. Boxes 3 and 4 below illustrate the respective rates of delivery

Box 3. ADRIAMED projects, Delivery vs. total budget (PROJECT EOD to 2011)

Project	Total Budget (EOD-NTE)	Total Expenditure (EOD to 2011 incl.)	Overall Rate of Delivery (EOD to 2011)
AdriaMed	8,087,157	7,610,961	94,11%
EC project	341,296	149,372	43,77%

Box 4. MEDSUDMED projects, Delivery vs. total budget (PROJECT EOD to 2011)

Project	Total Budget (EOD-NTE)	Total Expenditure (EOD to 2011 incl.)	Overall Rate of Delivery (EOD to 2011)
MedSudMed	5,400,502	4,976,387	92,15%
Sicily Regional	261,780	106,269	40,59%

32. The rates of delivery for the 2008-2011 period examined by the evaluation, show a constant and well monitored fund disbursement pattern, fully reflecting the events of the projects and the action of the Project Coordinators to cope with success with problems stemming from the progressive growth of the project.

33. AdriaMed and MedSudMed project funding agreements drove the donor contribution in the ProDocs covering the first phase of the projects. Subsequent project extensions, out of a compelling donor requirement, had to reflect a new contribution structure in view of the different cost-centre imputed. MIPAAF contributions were incorporated in a pay-per-service structure, entailing execution of activities before receiving funds.[2] The MOU instrument was adopted to formalise the new arrangement and this structure implied, per se, recourse to advance funding.

34. Another change occurred in late 2006, generated by the adoption by the Italian Ministry of Treasury and /Finance of the principles of 'perenzione' entailing the re-appropriation by the State Treasury of any unspent portion of funds previously allotted to Ministries. Earmarked and committed, but unspent MIPAAF funds became suddenly unavailable, creating problems in running project operations in 2007/2008, causing temporary use of cash advance and, ultimately, a net reduction of projects budget. Thus, the overall projects' financial resources were reduced through two budget revisions.[3]

35. To counteract the temporary fund shortages avoiding the inevitable halt to activities, the project had to run in deficit and is now called upon to pay the related interest bank charges. The Evaluation considers that FAO should take stock of this experience, with the

[2] This situation was facilitated by a 50%-45%-5% installment sequence, for which MIPAAF has to be commended

[3] Revision QQQ for ADRIAMED and MMM for MEDSUDMED

object of formulating a realistic policy and implementing solutions alternative to the interruption of project activities or relying on personal assumption of responsibility by a Budget Holder. Lastly, the financial implications related to belated payment of donor contribution should be more carefully examined since the formulation of project documents or extension and more actively followed during the project life cycle. A risk analysis would also be useful in appraising situation and potential future instances.

36. All Budget Revisions stemmed from the Coordinating Committee and the Evaluation found them to be coherent with the project principles and objectives, including operational aspects. Overall, BRs allowed the project to steer its implementation according to its goals, despite the budget cuts.

37. In conclusion, with the possible exception of the initial phase,[4] mainly devoted to shaping up the network in a difficult context, the projects became fully operational marking a high level of efficiency in producing scientific outputs through full participatory approach among network institutions.

4.2 Projects management

4.2.1 Institutional set-up

38. The projects have been run under the overall responsibility of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Marine and Inland Fisheries Group (FIRF) within the Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division (FIR).

39. FIRF is institutionally responsible, however its 'emprise' is not 'visible' ; in fact the highest level of project-related responsibility was embodied by the Coordinating Committee (one for each project). The Committee incorporates three components: FAO, Resource and Project Partners and is chaired by a Senior Representative of the Hosting Country. Decisions are taken through partners' consensus and provide guidance for implementation of Annual Workplan by the Project CTA and Management Unit. The CC is composed by

- FAO FIRF Lead Technical Unit;
- ADRIAMED-MEDSUDMED Project Management CTA and Unit Staff;
- A representative for each country of the Scientific Institution involved in the project network;
- A representative for each country of the Government Entity responsible for the Scientific Institution;
- CTAs of the COPEMED and EASTMED projects;
- Representative of GFCM;
- Senior Representatives of Donors, or their Delegates;
- Representatives of Scientific Institution(s) of Donor Country(ies).

[4] Approximately the first two years following project EOD: 1999-2001 for ADRIAMED and 2001-2004 for MEDSUDMED

40. The role of Lead Technical Officer had been recently assigned to a Senior FIRF Officer, who was entrusted with responsibility of leading, monitoring and coordinating all the projects in the Mediterranean basin. The LTO is expected to coordinate the Task Force, mostly comprising of staff from the FI department. The previous incumbent had carried out capacity development activities in a number of meetings, which were well appreciated by participants. The Evaluation noted that despite the length of the projects, and their 'programmatic' features, FIRF did not take any strategic or operational step to integrate the experienced developed by the projects in its plan of work for the sub-regions at any point in time.

41. Budget Holder responsibility was assigned to a Senior FIRF Technical Officer. The Budget Holder is responsible for the projects' delivery and progress in accordance with the work plan and accountable for the financial resources of the projects. However, functions performed were limited to the approval of financial documents reflecting actions in which the Officer had no participation and consequently insufficient background information. The designation of the Budget Holder, being in itself a management decision by FI/FIR, appeared to be based on hierarchical considerations, not on the principle of best-placed knowledge-cum-responsibility. Further, the absence of an alternate Budget Holder, as observed in FPMIS records, was considered detrimental to the overall projects management.

42. The Operations Group comprised a Project Operations Officer and one Assistant. Though formally the focal point and responsible for standard project operation functions, the Evaluation observed that the Unit tended to go beyond its mandate and take over responsibilities such as contacts with donors and other project partners, which would normally be considered an LTO, or even higher level's prerogative.

43. The Project Management Unit, responsible for the actual management of both projects is located in FAO HQ. It is headed by a Chief Technical Adviser/Project Coordinator, a FAO staff member himself, supported by a Fishery Monitoring Expert, a Fisheries Information Officer, an Assistant and a Secretary. De facto, the PMU had performed the vast majority of policy, strategy, technical and operational functions for the projects, besides acting as focal point for all external and internal stakeholders. The merging of project structures in one single PMU, occurred in the immediate pre-evaluation period, has positively contributed to efficient operations and cost effectiveness.

44. The real distribution of management and technical responsibility for the projects was not reflected in FAO's set-up: the CTA made decisions but did not possess any formal attribution of responsibility, including the power to approve the acts of management, for which he was factually responsible. The LTU, at the same time, had not provided the substantive guidance, nor fulfilled the formal role it was mandated to have. The absence of a FIRF representative at the 2012 Coordination Committee meetings is a clear sign of this absence. Overall, the Evaluation considered this distribution of roles and responsibilities inadequate and generating confusion due to overlapping of functions and formal attribution of responsibilities not coinciding with knowledge and performance.

4.2.2 Implementation, work-plans and monitoring mechanisms

45. Soon after their start back in early 2000, AdriaMed and MedSudMed were faced with a difficult environment experiencing rapid and radical mutations. Thus, the start-up of

the project's activities was not easy, in difficult political environments, characterized by major changes and strong conflicts of interests among and within countries. Notwithstanding difficulties, the scientific institutions soon established an effective cooperation, exchanging information and data, which were previously considered as country-strategic. This cooperation soon had the effect of 'dragging' the respective government structures, thereby planting the seed of resource sharing in a common interest area, and gradually moving from mistrust to cooperation.

46. As a result of positive achievements, at the end of the first phase (four/five-years resp.), an extension was decided in the 5th session of the Coordination Committee in November 2006. The projects were extended for a second four-year phase followed by yearly step-by-step extensions, initiating a series of committee-driven extensions under the maintained strong interest by the main donor, the Italian MIPAAF, and subsequently catalysing the interest of the EU and the region of Sicily through the input of two side-projects. Also, the recommendations and suggestions formulated by the Internal reviews undertaken during the projects life have been adopted and implemented.

47. Despite the weaknesses of the institutional set-up, in practice the projects have been well-managed and made progress by steering the increasing ambitions and achievements. This was possible through the following features:

- Full participatory approach among the active stakeholders of the projects;
- Network of collaborating scientific institutions animated by a spirit of open collaboration and mutual assistance;
- Personal acquaintance of scientists and technicians, beyond their present involvement with institutions;
- Participation of partner government entities in support of institutions and to principles of joint monitoring of common shared resources;
- Role, Efficiency and performance of the Project Management Unit, always close to the requests and expectations of participating countries.

48. The projects elaborated their annual work plans through a complex series of fully participatory exercises described in the scheme below, in which scientific and resource management issues were conveyed, discussed and matched with priorities and operational requirements. The elaborated work-plans were then approved by the Project Coordination at the annual meetings.

Box 5. Formulation of work-plans

- Workshops, training, research activities, technical assistance
- Indication of the GFCM, the SAC, the CAQ and Sub-Committees
- Indication provided by the countries in ad hoc meetings
- Indication provided by the Adriatic experts through the Working Groups
- Coordination Committee Meeting
- Workplan

ADRIAMED document – Coordination Committee, Tirana, March 2012

49. As to the Work-plan execution, the very nature of operations, the short-timed extensions, the issues of funds availability and their effect on the budget allocations did not always permit a 100% work-plan realism. Nevertheless, the 2012 Coordination Committee Meeting declared that the approximate percentage of achievement of the activities during the

last year was around 80-90%, which was considered a satisfactory result when dealing with complex scientific surveys within less than 9-10 months time to make them fit into a yearly work-plan.

50. In order to facilitate the direct and regular contact with participating countries each country appointed a focal point with a role/mandate to advise on specific project components at national level, ensures effective flow of communication to and from the national scientific counterparts and provides all the necessary support in information gathering and data collection.

51. The AdriaMed and MedSudMed annual Coordinating Committees played the leading role in discussing and prioritising activities, agreeing on annual work-plans, reviewing progress in their implementation, and undertaking comprehensive examination of the activities throughout the year. These meetings were an opportunity to get the appraisal from the countries, to assess and evaluate the work performed at national and regional level, to discuss and evaluate the results of the projects and to give clear direction to the projects' activities.

52. The work plan and future activities defined at each Coordination Committee Meeting were generally coherent with the work plan of the different Project components and with the expectations of the countries. The progress reports were regularly presented to the Donors, present also in the Coordinating Committees.

53. Reports on activity progress were also presented yearly to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the GFCM, listing the main outputs carried out by the projects and which could be considered relevant also for the Mediterranean area. Moreover, scientific presentations were made during the different GFCM subcommittee meetings and working groups of the SAC. These presentations have been a relevant aspect for the Projects, in particular concerning the strengthening of cooperation between the Projects and the Mediterranean fisheries science community and also in supporting the GFCM activities.

54. Over time, changes of project coordinators and in the location of the projects staffs have occurred, creating some logistical problems in terms of scientific coordination, preparation of documents, organisation of training courses etc. Furthermore the shortage of technical staff has been the subject of some delay with regard to the work related to Project communication (web site upgrading, finalization of publications) and data processing. However, thanks to the proactive action of the project's staff, its good relations with the scientists and then with the fisheries administrations; all the interviews demonstrate that this approach and modus-operandi have been highly successful as there is a general consensus to recognize that it was fundamental in creating a climate of confidence and a sense of common ownership of the projects that allow now the stakeholders to work in full participation and commitment.

55. It is clear that achieving sustainable development goals requires longer-term support, however operational and funding constraints made it necessary to design the projects for a duration of 3-4 years and request further extensions afterwards.

56. A weakness of the whole set of initiatives so far has been the absence of a strategy that would allow consolidating achievements and transforming them into a sustainable mechanism of scientific cooperation and joint assessments of shared fisheries resources. A

possible cause for this gap may be in the funding mechanism and the continuous extension of the projects which could have been addressed with a long-term programme since the inception. The initially scientific objective evolved into a scientific/policy/socio-economic network: this aspect was not properly monitored by FIRF, which did not anticipate an exit strategy with concerned parties (e.g. GFCM). This, despite the fact that all project partners/beneficiaries during the Coordinating Committee meetings, at least since 2009 onward, unanimously expressed their preoccupation and will that the network and common working mechanisms developed by the projects should be consolidated and strengthened.

57. In the opinion of the Evaluation, an 'exit strategy' is required through which FAO, should take on a leading role in formulating a consolidation phase that will set the basis for a long-term partnership with the institutions involved. This would allow ensuring the transmission of the project's know-how, lessons learned, achievements and experience into a new long-term institutional arrangements. This is particularly important when a project generates a network that needs to be strengthened and become sustainable for the future. In this connection, the Evaluation recommends consideration of the elements detailed in the 'outputs and outcomes' section of this report, as 'Milestones for the Future' transmitted by the Coordinating Committee participants during the 2012 meetings.

4.2.3 Technical and administrative backstopping

58. The Fisheries Authorities in the Member Countries and the Technical Divisions in FAO Fisheries Department are responsible for the monitoring Projects' activities and performance and providing the necessary backstopping. The GFCM Executive Secretary is also responsible for the follow up on activities directly related to the SAC Program of Work. All these stakeholders should normally have a direct role in the identification of the priorities and in reviewing projects' progress, as well as in facilitating the implementation of activities at the national and sub-regional levels.

59. It appears that this was not always the case for FIRF. Interviews with stakeholders showed that the strict technical role the LTU exercised in the past was both positive and important, particularly following the transfer of both project HQs to Rome. On the other hand, it seems that not enough attention was given by the LTU to the underpinning institutional aspects. This attitude did not help towards the possible – and advisable – adoption of a 'programme' approach versus the 'a sequence of projects' approach adopted; at the same time, the risk of losing achievements due to lack of additional efforts was seemingly not visualised. The projects were perceived as limited events, both in time and importance. Weak leadership by FAO may have also caused an observed confusion on attribution of tasks in FIR; also major recent changes in FI – FIR chain management did not help in providing adequate strategic guidance.

60. The Evaluation also noted the poor maintenance of adequate information in FPMIS, which should be the responsibility of the Budget Holder. The system did not contain, at the time of the Evaluation, all essential documents of project history to reflect actions taken throughout the projects' life. This was also considered an area where more clarity on roles and responsibilities would help and where immediate remedial action could be taken.

61. The Evaluation considers that FI as a whole has given so far insufficient consideration to the strategic role of the projects in the overall scenario of FAO's

interventions in the region and sub-regions and their future evolution, as witnessed by the poor documentation on the nature and achievements of these important long-lived projects. The absence of an exit strategy goes along this line.

62. Last, the Evaluation noted that FAO lacked a risk analysis and adequate corporate remedial actions in the case of unforeseeable reductions in resource partners' contributions to agreed projects. Corporate instructions should envisage possible actions in these cases, from appropriateness of generating bank charges to stopping projects' activities.

4.2.4 Governments' participation

63. The counterparts in the participating countries are fully involved in the Projects activities through their staffs and have put the research institutions' premises and equipment at the disposal of the projects.
They also allowed participation of national scientists to bring some interesting preliminary data working papers and scientific contributes for the stock assessments of some demersal and small pelagic species to various GFCM working groups and workshops. It is expected that some consolidated advices on these resources will be presented soon during the next GFCM-SAC meetings and that these advices will be used by the national delegations of the participating countries to make some first proposals of management recommendations.

5 Results and contribution to stated objectives

5.1 Outputs and outcomes

64. From the beginning of the projects, participating countries did not share easily among themselves any national data regarding the exploitation of some shared marine resources in order to assess their stocks and produce common scientific advices and management recommendations. This kind of scientific cooperation in the two sub-regions tended to be occasional and usually at the bilateral level.

65. The strongest achievement of the Projects AdriaMed and MedSudMed, as reported by all representatives of participating countries and as illustrated in the technical documents, is the establishment of consistent scientific cooperation on fisheries science in the Projects areas. This required a long and complex process; which eventually led to a broad consensus and cooperation among countries, with the full involvement of research institutions in their entirety, and not just from single researchers. The Projects encouraged and continuously developed a "regional attitude" to face and solve common problems, overcoming the initial reservations. For the first time, surveys were organized with mixed teams of researchers from several countries on the same research vessel and every activity was followed up with on the job training. This permitted the creation of a strong relationship between the researchers and contributed to create a common work attitude.

66. At the time of the Evaluation, scientists from the participating countries and from different fisheries research institutions regularly met or contacted each other by phone calls or emails, discussed and agreed on methodologies to be applied, put scientific data coming

from different surveys (demersal and small pelagic fisheries resources) in common data bases, made joint analysis of the data and discussed the results together.

Review of the AdriaMed activities in the period 2008-2011

67. The AdriaMed Working Group on demersal resources and the Study Group for the application of bottom-trawl survey data to fish stock assessment in South Adriatic Sea focused on the appraisal and stock assessment of demersal stocks (mainly sole and hake) and on indicators and reference points which may be considered at the regional level in line with the EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive. In addition the project examined the results of demersal surveys in the Adriatic Sea, of the investigation in deep waters, of the monitoring system for the Montenegrin fisheries and the results of the SOLEMON Project ("Stock assessment of Solea solea in the northern and central Adriatic Sea and evaluation of the impact of the different fishing activities").

68. Small pelagic stocks make up most of the landed catch from the Adriatic Sea: thanks to the availability of all the data communicated by the experts of the participating countries, the project is now able to produce robust stock assessments of small pelagic species, mainly anchovy and sardine in GSA 17 which are important for the local fisheries in the Adriatic Sea.

69. The Project continued to support the establishment of sub-regional fisheries monitoring system in order to promote the scientific cooperation in the area. ATrIS (AdriaMed Trawl Survey Information System), a software for managing and processing data sets from the trawl surveys, had been developed and was being used by 20 research institutes in the Adriatic and in the Mediterranean, after distribution to the MEDITS participants and SGMED experts for the estimation of biological indicators after a request from STECF European Commission Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries. A pilot study to implement a monitoring system for economic and social information in the Montenegrin fisheries sector, applying the GFCM Operational Unit (OU) concept was also developed in the context of the project. Montenegro and Albania further requested specific actions to be taken by the AdriaMed project in the aquaculture sector.

70. In the context of AdriaMed, the management of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit area started to be looked at. This area, accessible for the Italian and Croatian fishing fleets, is very important for the local trawling activity and is the main Adriatic nursery area for hake. The definition of a common management plan in order to apply common rules or at least harmonize the management and conservation measures taken by the interested countries was of primary importance. The entrusted work environment created by the AdriaMed between the participating countries allowed in the last few years the discussion of this sensitive argument in all details and it is hoped that very soon a common management plan for this area will be defined. A technical paper presented at the 13th Coordination Committee of AdriaMed in 2012, included further information for the elaboration of a management plan of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit area, namely: preliminary information on additional data from trawl survey in the Central Adriatic in summer 2011; suggestions regarding the mesh size to propose for bottom trawls; future effort restrictions and temporal closures; monitoring through biological surveys and socio-economic surveys to assess the impact of fishing activities and the consequence of fishing effort management options.

Review of the MedSudMed activities in the period 2008-2011

71. MedSudMed carried out a longer list of activities, described briefly here below:

- On demersal fisheries, an inter-calibration exercise at sea between the Tunisian and Italian Research vessels.
- In cooperation with the CopeMed II Project, an analysis of hake and related fisheries and the assessment of the shrimp stocks in the south-central Mediterranean, including economic parameters in the analysis. The results, including the management advice proposed, were presented at the FAO GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee - Working Group of Demersal Species in October 2011.
- Support to the identification of shared stocks of Octopus vulgaris in the south central-Mediterranean; it also organised with CopeMedII a joint meeting of the Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources to identify possible joint activities and a workshop on "Fisheries and appraisal of Coryphaena hippurus in the south-central and western Mediterranean Sea" in July 2011.
- 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.
- On small pelagic species, in the inter-session period, efforts were made in pursuing the improvement of expertise on small pelagic fisheries resources and harmonising methodologies for data collection at sea, standardisation of sampling and data processing procedures, and identification of population units for small pelagic in the Project area.
- Support for the drafting of a monitoring programme on Posidonia oceanica meadows along the Libyan coast

72. Management Partnerships involving the Industry Representatives, fishermen Associations and Government Representatives has been initiated in the two projects areas. At the time of the evaluation the projects have reached a new phase of cooperation which will lead to proposals of some important multinational recommendations. The MedSudMed meeting on closed season for fisheries recently held in Tunisia with the involvement of national administrations could be considered as an illustration of this evolution. During this meeting a pilot experiment was initiated for the harmonization of fishing closure in Libya, Tunisia, Malta and Italy and it was considered advisable that, taking advantage of this pilot action the initiative be expanded to the Mediterranean regional level, possibly through a GFCM decision. Another positive example of promoted international cooperation was the effort for the protection of Jabuka/ Pomo in the Central Adriatic Sea mentioned above.

73. The Evaluation had solid evidence that in the views of participants, AdriaMed played a strategic role by being the only project which brings together all the Adriatic riverine countries. This facilitated and strengthened the regional coordination and the implementation of joint activities, which resulted, inter alia, in joint data collection and finally joint appraisal of shared resources. Particular mention was also made of the effective establishment of regional cooperation among the research institutions and the fisheries administrations in the Adriatic which allowed for the improvement of fisheries management in the Project area.

74. The participants to the MedSudMed project highlighted its important role supporting joint work on shared stocks, such as stock boundary identification and assessment. They stated that this constitutes the necessary baseline for the final goal of formulating harmonized fisheries management strategies and emphasized the need to maintain these activities in order to fulfil the GFCM/SAC recommendations.

75. Overall, representatives of the participating countries have been consistent in their appreciation and analysis of the projects as follows:

a. Unanimous consensus on the highly positive assessment of the projects and its achievements;
b. Essentiality of the FAO role, to be preserved in the present and any future environment, as a guarantee of institutional presence, quality of technical support, inputs and capacity building, independent judgement, neutrality, honest broker;
c. The development of a scientific/socio-political network was regarded as the fruit of common efforts and a top important asset to be preserved, along with its nature of sub-regional common-interest cluster.

76. The Evaluation also noted the expressed readiness to move forward, within the network framework, to form bilateral assistance in capacity building, technical training, etc., including eventual provision of financial support. These elements were also mentioned and raised as caveats in reaction to the hypothesis made by the Evaluation, of a possible future existence for the projects in a different context. Preservation of acquired assets, FAO's presence, network identity are considered a 'must'. Consolidation and long-term partnerships mean 'moving a structure', not 'handing over' results.

77. As to the main Donors, a general consensus was expressed on project policy, strategy, scientific orientation and achievements. However, and despite the continuing interest, the difficulty of further commitment and funds availability were emphasised.

5.2 Gender equality

78. In the management of both projects, gender equality in staffing was pursued satisfactorily. At the level of participants in Coordination Committees, workshops and working groups, the gender balance was slightly only in favour of men with percentages 57% against 43% of women. The Evaluation acknowledged that decisions for selection of national focal points and the national delegates into project activities were made by the institutions in the participating countries.

79. At the same time, the Evaluation also acknowledges that so far, gender and social inclusion aspects have been of minor relevance in projects with scientific cooperation activities. Nevertheless, if future project activities would actually move into social and economic analysis linked to shared fisheries stock management, equality and equity issues from both gender and inclusion perspectives become highly relevant in socio-economic data analysis, access to resources and markets as well as value chains, among others.

5.3 Capacity Development

80. The Projects supported several training initiatives aimed at building national expertise. The major topics of the training were data collection, echo-surveys and fish age determination. This component also helped to develop standardized methodologies for important research fields such as fisheries data collection, processing and compilation, fish age determination, fish population dynamics. All these training activities contributed also to facilitate the flow of knowledge among scientists from different area and experiences, helping to build trust among scientists belonging to different Institutes and between those scientists and the Project. Among others the following training events have been organized:

- Training Courses on macroscopic identification of sex maturity stages of fisheries resources focused on the macroscopic identification of sexual maturity stages of fisheries target species;
- Training course on age determination of cephalopods and crustaceans. This course provided an overview of the techniques used for the determination of age distributions for selected species of cephalopods and crustaceans, through the analysis of length frequency distributions;
- Training course on basic fishery biology techniques to provide an overview of the techniques used in laboratory for the identification of sex and maturity, the extraction and storage of otoliths and the preliminary processing of data;
- Training course for technical operators on marine biotoxins;
- Training course on processing of oceanographic data;
- Training course on processing of ichthyoplankton samples focused on the identification of the eggs and larvae of main target species, as well as on the techniques for the estimation and mapping of ichthyoplankton density;
- Training course on processing water samples for the analysis of nutrients and organic matters as indicators of water quality and trophic content;
- Training course on processing acoustic data related to zooplankton. including the basic techniques to process raw acoustic data and calculations to provide estimates of zooplankton biomass;
- Training course on bacteriological and virological investigations for controlling food safety of bivalve molluscs;
- Training course on the software “Echoview”, which is used to analyse acoustic data.

5.4 Impact and sustainability

81. Sustainability is related to the nature of the Project’s activities and their achievements; surveys at sea, or training courses, for example, are directly related to the funds these activities can receive.

82. It appears that the AdriaMed and MedSudMed projects have satisfactorily achieved their main objectives at the institutional level, where attribution can be assessed with a reasonable degree of plausibility:

i. The execution of ad hoc training courses led to upgrading of the national experts on specific issues.
ii. The projects have developed international scientific cooperation among the participant countries and strengthened cooperation among the experts of different laboratories within the same institutions.
iii. The knowledge on the fisheries resources bio-ecology and fisheries is increased.

iv. Demersal and small pelagic fishery resources are now surveyed at regional level and it is possible now to make joint assessments of several stocks shared by several national fleets in the projects areas.
v. The projects provided valuable scientific contributions to the GFCM/SAC activities in supporting and facilitating joint and common assessments of shared stocks, thus significantly contributing to the work of the Sub Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA). Moreover the projects financially supported the participation of the scientists from the partner countries to the GFCM workshops and meetings.

83. Despite these positive achievements, further efforts are required to consolidate achievement on a number of aspects, namely: monitoring of shared stocks; running and updating of databases; updating of the Web site; collecting and processing information on socio economical issues on a regional basis; harmonization of the fisheries legislations and regulations to be carried out on a routine basis.

84. The improved scientific knowledge resulting from projects' activities, can be considered as an advantage gained, together with regional cooperation among participants and improved national capacity. These achievements have created a solid base for the prospects of sustainability.

85. Still, ensuring the preservation of the institutional memory of participating institutes and consolidating the institutional capacity within participating countries will be essential for the longer-term sustainability of the results achieved so far. For this to happen, a last effort appears critical towards widening the participation to a larger number of researchers in the process of planning activities.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

86. The projects have undertaken extensive work and valuable scientific contributions have been provided to the participating countries. The main and relevant scientific outputs produced by the projects were presented to the GFCM through its Scientific Advisory Committees as technical contributions, particularly in relation to shared stocks.

87. Regional scientific cooperation concerning fisheries science has been successfully established in the Projects areas; common methodologies were developed and implemented through organizing joint field training activities and surveys at sea; also, projects have succeeded in strengthening expertise at national levels and in tackling the main aspects of the planned technical work. There is now a very good level of spontaneous cooperation including not only the partner scientific institutions and government institutions, but also more and more fishers representatives and other stakeholders of the fishery sector.

88. MedSudMed interacts closely with Adriamed with support provided on administrative matters, information technology and Web-site building, as well as other technical issues. In addition several training activities were co-organized with AdriaMed like the training course on the use of Echoview software for acoustic data management. Several

experts of the MedSudMed Project's region participated in the AdriaMed training activities and vice versa. Synergy was also created with the FAO Regional Project CopeMed II "Coordination to Support Fisheries Management in the Western and Central Mediterranean" to optimize available the resources for the maximum benefit to the countries.

89. The Projects Management Unit has been highly effective, in steering decision-making through a full participatory approach and by adopting a strategy of gradual involvement of scientific, political and socio-economic entities through a process of identification, adoption of principles of common interest and use of shared resources. Not least, it showed an excellent capacity of interfacing with the radical political changes experienced by the participating countries.

90. In summary, correct orientations and good management led to two successful projects. Merit has to be ascribed to the AdriaMed and MedSudMed staff, as well as staff from national institutions who have been fully committed in the implementation and monitoring of the projects and became full partners.

91. The FI Department approach to the administration of the project has not been very efficient and effective in terms of ensuring smooth operations, feed-back loop between the projects and FI and FIRF broader work, compliance with rules and regulations. In particular, FIR/FIRF risks losing the opportunity to:

a. appropriate the AdriaMed and MedSudMed experience as a possible model for a programme approach in the area of scientific cooperation on shared resources management; and
b. ensure full sustainability of the results achieved so far by the absence of an adequate consolidation and long-term partnership development strategy.

6.2 Recommendations

92. On the basis of the evidence and analysis above, the Evaluation formulates the following recommendations on operational aspects:

Recommendation 1: To FIRF on project management and administration

FIRF should review and re-define areas and levels of responsibility including criteria of assignment of functions; rationalise overlapping and duplications of roles among the Lead Technical Unit, Operations and the Chief Technical Advisor.

Recommendation 2: To FIRF on project management and administration

FIRF should: a) review attribution of Budget Holder Responsibility respecting the principle of best placed knowledge-cum responsibility; and b) appoint the Alternate Budget Holder and document appointment accordingly

93. Additional recommendations can be formulated on substantive aspects of AdriaMed and MedSudMed future work. These tackle both strengthening work already ongoing as well as broadening more systematically their focus.

Recommendation 3: To the projects, on strengthening research and networks

The projects should strengthen the following areas of work:
a) improve the development and diffusion of scientific publications on activities and researches carried out within the projects, contribute to international scientific literature;
b) enhance focus on multidisciplinary research in support of fisheries management compatible with EAF, by supporting the organisation of joint cooperative research activities with common and standardised procedures and reinforcing the activities on training and human capacity development of staff of fisheries institutions;
c) enhance the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), by strengthening the capacity of the national institutions in terms of both human resources and organization, as well as direct support to the consultation process necessary for achieving this goal.

Recommendation 4: To the projects, on areas for further support

The projects should include activities aimed at:
a) increasing the understanding of the role of small-scale and recreational fisheries (including biological, technological, and socio-economic aspects) and reinforce the institutional capacity to address and manage also this component of the fisheries systems;
b) strngthening the capacity to explicitly include the interactions between capture fisheries and aquaculture in the management process;
c) reinforcing research and capacity development on the socio-economic component of fisheries, including ad hoc studies on consumer's expectations, marketing problems, eco-labelling and product certification.

94. AdriaMed and MedSudMed are on their way to reach soon the final goal of formulating harmonized fisheries management strategies for several important shared resources and to propose some important multinational recommendations aimed at their regional conservation to be proposed for adoption by the GFCM; so consolidating and strengthening the network of experts and the cooperation between the various stakeholders (scientists, administrations, fishermen) from the participating countries is highly advisable.

95. The original intent of establishing the sub-regional projects was to address directly the needs of the GFCM, as mentioned above. As confirmed by the recent Performance review of the GFCM, there is satisfactory recognition by the participating countries of the benefits from these projects and it is important to strengthen their linkages with GFCM priorities and processes. This could be achieved in particular by enhancing stronger concentration and focus on fewer priority objectives dealing with fisheries management.

96. An extension of the activities for a new phase of two to four years could be recommended but due to the current economic crisis undergone by the donor countries it seems improbable that the current way of functioning may continue. At the same time, participating countries have express the wish to see the projects continue, maintaining the sub regional working scale under a common interest structure. During the interviews it was underlined that this could be achieved by merging the donor contributions into a multi-donors project or program.

97. It also appeared important that AdriaMed and MedSudMed partners continue to benefit from the FAO labelling as all the persons met by the evaluation team underlined that

this would ensure and guarantee the continued credibility of the initiatives. In line with these wishes, a perspective for the continuation of the sub regional projects could be to develop synergies under the umbrella of the GFCM.

98. Furthermore, the next priority objective of the GFCM, confirmed during its last plenary session (Marrakesh, 14-19 may 2012), is to establish and implement management plans for relevant specific fisheries in each Mediterranean sub region. This objective perfectly coincides with the AdriaMed and MedSudMed long term objectives (see para 2-22).

99. The new GFCM Framework Programme (FWP) for 2013-2018 has been recently adopted; it aims at providing the Commission with a regional vision/scope and the necessary extra-budgetary funds to carry out those activities relating to fisheries and aquaculture to be identified together with GFCM member countries. The FWP is envisaged as a platform that will promote sustainable development and cooperation in the GFCM Area, including with FAO Regional Projects and with partner organizations; so it can be regarded as an opportunity to optimize the use of resources and to allow the FAO projects to continue providing technical assistance to GFCM Members and to contribute to a greater extent to the development and implementation of fisheries management recommendations by the Commission.

100. Also, during the 2012 GFCM plenary session, satisfaction was expressed for the launching of the FWP in support particularly of developing states and it was reported that some GFCM member countries are ready to participate in funding the FWP. It was also pointed out that due account of the results achieved by the FAO Regional Projects in relation to technical assistance and capacity building would be needed to better understand gaps and needs that have to be addressed through the FWP.

101. In the light of the above, the Evaluation recommends the following steps for ensuring the sustainability of efforts and achievements so far.

Recommendation 5: To FI, the projects and GFCM

All parties concerned, i.e. the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, GCP/RER/010/ITA and GFCM Secretariat, should develop by end of 2012 a road-map to be proposed to partners for discussion, endorsement and funding, that would allow the integration of AdriaMed and MedSudMed achievements within the 2013-2018 GFCM Framework Programme.

Annex F

Common opinion of AdriaMed countries regarding EC proposal for management plan for small pelagic

AdriaMed countries supports Commission's endeavors concerning the preparation of the multi-annual management plan for the Adriatic Sea. We also recognize the importance of cooperation and development of concerted and coordinated measures at the level of the Adriatic. The long cooperation of the countries of the basin has already yielded results, primarily in the framework of scientific cooperation and data collection. The fruitful cooperation should be continued, and given the results obtained thus far, we believe that AdriaMed as the regional project and GFCM as the Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries body, would be a good starting point for the development of future measures within the framework of the GFCM guidelines for management plans.

We believe that in order to have a robust management plan to ensure the sustainability of these resources, a process is required. Therefore we are of the opinion that careful consideration should be given to measures to be contained in the potential plan, given the specific nature of the resources and the characteristic of this mixed fishery.

In the AdriaMed meeting the representative of the GFCM Secretariat presented a preliminary roadmap to test the feasibility of implementing GFCM guidelines for the specific case study of small pelagics in the Adriatic Sea. First meeting for this exercise will be at the end of this week in Split and it is expected that there will be a discussion and definition of priorities and objectives, and then there will be a discussion on potential measures. Within this framework, the measures proposed by EU could be addressed and discussed as potential measures. As a result of the GFCM meeting in Split we expect to prepare a draft background document to support the future management plans and a roadmap for the next steps to decide on measures.

List of Documents

FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/01	Provisional Annotated Agenda
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/02	Report on the intersessional activities of the Project
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/03	Project future implementation
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/04	FAO Independent Evaluation of the AdriaMed Project GCP/RER/010/ITA—GCP/RER/EC/021
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 1	Provisional list of participants
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 2	Report of the Thirteenth Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee. *AdriaMed Technical Documents N. 29*
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 3	AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 3-5 October 2012). *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 181*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 181
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 4	Stock Assessment Forms on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources, namely *Engraulis encrasicolus* and *Sardina pilchardus*. Data presented at the GFCM - SAC - SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment on Small Pelagic Species (Split, Croatia, 5-9 November 2012)
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 5	AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (Fano, Italy 17-19 September 2012). *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 179*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 179
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 6	Stock Assessment Forms on Demersal Fisheries Resources, namely *Merluccius merluccius, Parapenaeus longirostris, Solea solea* and *Squilla mantis.* Data presented at the GFCM - SAC - SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment on Demersal Species (Split, Croatia, 5-9 November 2012)
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 7	Report of the AdriaMed Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading (Anchovy) (Ancona, Italy 4-5 June 2012). *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 175*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 175

FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 8	Report of the echosurvey carried out in the South Adriatic Sea (GSA 18) - Albania and Montenegro continental shelf (July-August 2012) Report of the Daily egg production method (DEPM) survey in South Adriatic Sea (GSA 18) (July-August 2012)
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 9	Report of the Study Group for the application of bottom-trawl survey data to fish stock assessment in South Adriatic Sea (GSA 18) Torre a Mare (BA), Italy 3-7 September 2012. *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 178*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 178
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 10	AdriaMed Study Group on Daily Egg Production Method (DEPM) for the appraisal of small pelagic fisheries resources in the Adriatic Sea (Ancona, Italy, 6-8 June 2012) *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 176*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 176
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 11	AdriaMed Study Group on Daily Egg Production Method (DEPM) for the appraisal of small pelagic fisheries resources in the Adriatic Sea (Ljubljana, Slovenia 1-3 October 2012) *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 180*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 180
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 12	SoleDiff project – "Genetic differentiation of *Solea solea* and *S. aegyptiaca* in northern Adriatic Sea and population structure of the common sole in the Mediterranean Sea" **-** Preliminary results
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 13	AdriaMed Technical Meeting on Small Scale Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 183*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 183
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 14	AdriaMed 1st Meeting on Fisheries Management Plans in the GSA 17. *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 184*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 184
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 15	AdriaMed *ad hoc* meeting on the Jabuka/Pomo Pit. *AdriaMed Meeting Memorandum 177*. GCP/RER/010/ITA OM 177
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 16	AdriaMed ASFA activities. Report presented at the annual ASFA Advisory Board Meeting (Oranmore, Ireland, 25-29 June 2012)
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 17	Major activities of the FAO Regional Projects. Documents presented at the GFCM 36th session (Marrakech, Morocco, Marrakech, 14 - 19 May 2012)
FAO AdriaMed: CC/14/info 18	List of Documents