



**Deep-water rose shrimps, European hake and related fisheries
in the MedSudMed Project area**

Malta, 24-26 June 2014

Terms of References

1. Background and rationale

To plan and manage fisheries are the only options to ensure sustainability of resources and address multiple needs of societies in terms of food security and income production. In 1995 the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) was adopted, providing the necessary framework for national and international efforts to ensure the sustainable exploitation of aquatic living resources. The CCRF has indicated principles and standards applicable to the conservation, management and development of all fisheries.

Management of fisheries exploiting coastal species or operating in coastal areas is generally dealt with at national level. In the case of exploitation of straddling or shared stocks like deep water shrimps and associated species, fisheries management assumes an international relevance and harmonisation of strategies among countries is an essential pre-requisite to ensure the achievement of management objectives.

In the Mediterranean Sea, the occurrence of shared stocks and the need of harmonised view on the management of fisheries exploiting them are widely acknowledged. The FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Sea (GFCM) is instrumental in coordinating efforts by governments to effectively manage fisheries at regional level following the CCRF. The GFCM adopted guidelines to contribute to the effective fisheries management in the Mediterranean:

- i) Guidelines on a general management framework and presentation of scientific information for multiannual management plans for sustainable fisheries in the GFCM area (GFCM 36th session, May 2012)¹;
- ii) Guidelines on the management of fishing capacity in the GFCM area (Resolution GFCM/37/2013/2)²;
- iii) Guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption of GFCM multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at sub-regional levels in the GFCM area (GFCM 37th session, May 2013)².

The south-central Mediterranean Sea connects the western and eastern parts of the Mediterranean basin. This area has considerable importance for the fisheries of several countries, as witnessed by the substantial fishing fleet operating in the zone and the associated capture production. Fisheries in the area sustain the local communities of the bordering countries involving a large number of stakeholders.

¹FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. Report of the thirty-sixth session. Marrakech, Morocco, 14–19 May 2012.. GFCM Report. No. 36. Rome, FAO. 2012, Appendix I, page 49.

² Report of the Thirty-seventh session of the Commission Seventh session of the Committee on Compliance Fourth session of the Committee on Administration and Finance (Split, Croatia, 13-17 May 2013). Appendix I, pp 89-95.

Deep water shrimps and associated species are probably the most important fisheries resources in the south-central Mediterranean, both in terms of economic value and quantity landed. *Parapenaeus longirostris* (Deep-water rose shrimp), *Merluccius merluccius* (European hake) and associated species are harvested by the fishing fleets of Italy, Malta, Tunisia and, to some extent, of Libya with a total capture production exceeding 10 000 tons per year.

Since its inception the MedSudMed project supports the monitoring of fisheries resources and the ecosystems in the south-central Mediterranean Sea, as well as the scientific cooperation among national research institutions of participating countries. The overall objective was to contribute to lay the basis for harmonised fisheries management in the Project area.

During its meeting, the Project Coordination Committee (Malta, April 2013 and Tunisia, April 2014) agreed that the scientific cooperation framework established by the Project should move forward, involving fisheries administration and stakeholders generally. The objective was to further foster technical discussion for the development of harmonised management strategies for fisheries exploiting shared or straddling stocks in the south-central Mediterranean Sea.

As follow up, formal and informal meetings were organised by MedSudMed and support was provided to the activities foreseen by the GFCM concerning the development of case studies for the implementation of the GFCM guidelines on fisheries management. In this context, MedSudMed contributed to the organisation of the GFCM Sub-Regional Workshop on Fisheries Management for Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean that, for the Project area, focused on *P. longirostris*, *M. merluccius* and associated species (Tunisia, October 2013). To continue to fuel technical discussion on the management of fisheries exploiting such species, the organisation of a further MedSudMed meeting was deemed necessary by the participating countries. An outline of the new meeting objectives, themes, and organisation is provided hereunder.

2. Objectives and themes of the workshop

The overall objective of the workshop will be to contribute to the development of an internationally agreed multi-annual management plan for fisheries targeting *P. longirostris*, *M. merluccius* and associated species in the south-central Mediterranean Sea to be presented and discussed for adoption at the GFCM meeting. The workshop will be an occasion to overview data, knowledge and processes for information sharing in the south-central Mediterranean and identify gaps that may hamper the development of harmonised fisheries management.

The workshop will be organized in three sessions. The first session will include the presentation of overviews of scientific knowledge on the fisheries resources (including accessory species and bycatch), fisheries exploiting them and related national regulations. The information should be based on available knowledge and cover biological and ecological information on fisheries resources, the marine ecosystem and, where applicable, the fisheries socio-economic dynamics.

In particular the following topics should be addressed:

- Fisheries resources
 - Overview of the current knowledge on target species, *P. longirostris*, *M. merluccius*
 - Assemblages of exploited species;
 - Nurseries and spawning grounds;
 - Stock assessment of main target species.

- Fisheries
Identification of fishing segments exploiting resources;
Data gathering on total catch and seasonality;
Spatial distribution of fishing effort;
Fishing gears and their properties;
Socio-economic aspects;
Current management measures.

During the second session, an overview will be provided on:

- GFCM Guidelines on management plans, fishing capacity and precautionary measures;
- Proposed minimum structure, criteria and measures to be used in a regional management plan for bottom trawling fisheries for Deep water rose shrimp (*P. longirostris*) and associated species in the Strait of Sicily (GSA12 – 16) as prepared during the GFCM Subregional Technical Workshop on Fisheries Multiannual Management Plans for the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

During the third session, participants are expected to identify the priority issues that need to be addressed for to progress toward the development of harmonised views and approaches for fisheries management of fisheries targeting *P. longirostris*, *M. merluccius* and associated species in the south-central Mediterranean Sea.

3. Expected outputs

The main expected outputs are:

- A synthesis of the available information (scientific and anecdotic) and type of studies carried out in the region;
- The identification of gaps that may hamper the achievement of a harmonised approach to fisheries management in the MedSudMed sub-region;
- A roadmap defining steps to:
 - contribute to fill the knowledge gaps identified (e.g. fishing technology, socio-economy, sharing of information);
 - develop a common view on the management of fisheries targeting *P. longirostris* and *M. merluccius*;
 - ensure the involvement of all fisheries stakeholders in a cooperative and consultative process.

4. Participation and organisation

The meeting is open to technicians, researchers, representatives of fisheries administration and fisheries associations, from institutions and/or organizations in the countries involved in the MedSudMed Project. The meeting could be tentatively planned for the first half of 2014.

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Provisional Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting

The Agenda, objectives and organisation of the meeting will be introduced.

2. Description of the current knowledge on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius* and related fisheries in the MedSudMed area

*National experts will be called to illustrate the research, monitoring activities and data/information on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius* and related fisheries performed at national and international level. Scientific and anecdotic information will be dealt with. The results of joint stock assessment, spatial distribution, critical areas (nurseries and spawning grounds) will be illustrated and discussed, as well as information on fishing effort, fishing grounds, fishing gears adopted and possible options to reduce the capture of juveniles and of discards generally, and on fisheries socio-economic related aspects.*

3. GFCM framework for the development fisheries management plans

*The current framework for the development fisheries management plans in place in Mediterranean will be briefly illustrated. The contents and process that lead to the development of the GFCM Guidelines on management plans, fishing capacity and precautionary measures and Proposed minimum structure, criteria and measures to be used in a regional management plan for bottom trawling fisheries for deep water rose shrimp (*P. longirostris*) and associated species in the Strait of Sicily (GSA12 – 16) will be illustrated. The options to take the best possible advantage of the outcomes of the work done by the GFCM will also be explored.*

4. Roadmap to progress toward the joint development of multi-annual management plan for fisheries targeting *Parapenaeus longirostris*, *Merluccius merluccius* and associated species.

*The gaps that may hamper the development of a harmonised approach on the management of fisheries targeting *Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius* will be identified. Participants will discuss and preliminary agree on steps to be followed for filling the gaps that hamper the joint discussion on fisheries management in the south central Mediterranean. The preliminary timeframe for addressing priority issues identified during the meeting will also be dealt with. The best options to ensure the full involvement of stakeholders into the cooperative discussion for the definition of multi-annual management plan for fisheries targeting *P. longirostris*, *M. merluccius* and associated species will tentatively be identified.*

5. Other matters.