

The GFCM is currently undertaking the following cooperative projects with other Organisms:

1) Ministero dell’Ambiente e della tutela del Territorio e del Mare of Italy

GFCM and the Italian Ministry of Environment have started a joint project for the synergic implementation of the European Marine Strategic Framework Directive (MSFD) and in support of the UNEP-Map Ecosystem Approach (EcAP) initiative, towards the sustainable use of marine biological resources. The project will contribute to develop a coherent and coordinated frame across the Mediterranean Sea for the definition of the measures and the different elements of the marine strategies, by:

- a) establishing a comprehensive set of environmental targets and associated indicators for the marine waters (article 5(2)(a) (iii) of the MSDF);
- b) continuing ongoing assessment and regular updating of targets to determine the good environmental status of exploited populations in the Mediterranean Sea, including at sub-regional level (article 5(2)(a)(iv) of the MSDF);
- c) proposing measures to achieve and/or maintain good environmental status, when necessary (article 5(2)(b)(i) of the MSDF).

The project will build upon the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between GFCM and UNEP-MAP (comparison and harmonization of targets, indicators and monitoring of good environmental status between MSFD and EcAP), as well as the MoU with ICES (incorporation of ecosystem issues on the assessment of status of marine populations).

The chronogram, methodology and activities to be carried out within this project have already been defined in a preparatory phase, and the following main activities are expected to take place in the first six months of the project: i) detailed review of the existing frameworks for the definition of the status of marine populations (MSFD, EcAP and GFCM framework for the assessment of the status of exploited stocks), with proposals for harmonization and monitoring, ii) meeting of national representatives, experts and stakeholders (January – February 2014) to review the harmonization and monitoring proposals and validate the methodology and case studies to include in the project.

ACCOBANS

GFCM and ACCOBANS have prepared a Project concept note on the conservation of cetaceans and marine birds and turtles, through the reduction of bycatch. The project has been accepted by the MAVA foundation (<http://www.mava-foundation.org/>) and the full project technical description is currently being developed. The project will be developed in two components; a first component with the goal to reduce the negative interactions between protected species and fishing activities, and a second component devoted to the overall reduction of fishing pressure through diversifying the activities of artisanal fishers towards ecotourism activities.

ICES

In addition to the activities that will take place in relation to the joint project with the Italian Ministry of Environment, the following activities are also expected to take place within the MoU with ICES.

- Revitalizing of EIFAC-ICES-GFCM WG on eel (including on the basis of the conclusions from the Tunis meeting);
- Exchange of relevant information on scientific approaches to fisheries management.

RACMED

The GFCM and RAC-MED, on the basis of their memorandum of understanding, are expected to intensify their cooperation. Particular focus will be placed on the socio-economic dimension of fisheries. Among others, the issue of IUU fishing and small-scale fisheries will be discussed. In the latter respect, RAC-MED is expected to participate in the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea that will be held in Malta.

MEDPAN

Like in the case of RAC-MED, MedPAN too will also participate in the Symposium. In addition, the involvement of MedPAN is envisaged within the frame of the first meeting of the GFCM Working Group on MPAs. There could be also scope to include MedPAN in the discussions and the works relating to the project with the Italian Ministry of Environment.

BLACK SEA COMMISSION

The GFCM and the Black Sea Commission have carried out together the Joint Workshop on IUU fishing in the Black Sea in February 2013 at the Black Sea Commission HQ in Istanbul. A roadmap was put forth which was subsequently endorsed by the GFCM at its 37th Session. The two organizations will now continue working together to implement the roadmap. Furthermore, cooperation will continue within the remit of the GFCM Working Group on the Black Sea, whose third meeting is scheduled to take place shortly.

DG MARE PROJECT ON MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

The GFCM is part of the partnership that has recently been awarded the DG MARE project on Marine Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean Sea. Being included in a broad consortium, and because the grant agreement between the DG MARE and the leading entity spearheading the consortium is underway, the GFCM has been informed that the project will focus on the Adriatic and Ionian region. The GFCM will provide expertise in relation to fisheries, aquaculture and conservation of marine ecosystems and thus inform the works in the project concerning the operationalization of marine spatial planning. A kick off meeting to gather all representatives of the entities within the consortium is expected before long.