

**REPORT OF THE NINTH MEETING
OF THE COPEMED II
COORDINATION COMMITTEE**

MALTA 28-29 APRIL 2016



CopeMed II Technical Documents N°43
GCP/INT/028/SPA; GCP/INT/252/EC

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St Julian's, Malta 28-29 April 2016

April 2016

The conclusions and recommendations given in this document and in other documents in the *Co-ordination to Support Fisheries Management in the Western and Central Mediterranean CopeMed II Project* series are those considered appropriate at the time of preparation. They may be modified in the light of further knowledge gained in subsequent stages of the Project. The designation employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, the Government of Spain or the Commission of the European Union concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or concerning the determination of its frontiers or boundaries. This document has been financed by the European Union and the Government of Spain. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the Government of Spain.

Preface

The CopeMed II Project on *Co-ordination to Support Fisheries Management in the Western and Central Mediterranean* is executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and funded by the Government of Spain, represented by the Secretaría General de Pesca (M^o de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente, MAGRAMA), and the European Union, represented by the European Commission (EC). The premises of the project at the Subdelegación del Gobierno in Málaga (Spain) are part of the Spanish contribution included in the agreement with the FAO.

The objective of the project is to maintain the sustainability of the marine fisheries in the central and western Mediterranean Sea and its ecosystem, taking into consideration environmental, biological, economic, social and institutional issues. In addition, the project will continue to reinforce the collaboration among the participating countries of the sub-region by facilitating their participation in the activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and in the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

Regions covered by CopeMed II are the western and central sub-regions of the Mediterranean. Participating countries are Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Tunisia and Spain. The main beneficiaries are the fishery policy-makers, managers and fishery administrations in the western and central Mediterranean countries. The project is also contributing to the strengthening of regional collaboration by supporting the participation of the countries in relevant regional scientific organizations, such as the FAO's General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). Secondary beneficiaries include the national research institutes, fishers and fishers' associations, and industrial organizations.

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CopeMed II (GCP/INT/028/SPA – GCP/INT/252/EC) Publications

CopeMed II project publications are issued in the CopeMed Technical Documents series and are related to meetings, missions and research organized or conducted within the framework of the CopeMed II Project.

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

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For bibliographic purposes this document should be cited as follow:

CopeMed II. 2016. Report of the Ninth Meeting of the CopeMed II Coordination Committee. St Julian's, Malta, 28-29 May 2016. CopeMed II Technical Documents N° 43 (GCP/INT/028/SPA - GCP/INT/252/EC). Málaga, 2016. 37pp.

Preparation of this document

This document is the final version of the report of the 9th meeting of the Coordination Committee of the FAO-Project CopeMed II held at St Julian's (Malta) the 28-29 May 2016 adopted by the participants' members. The finalisation of this CopeMed Technical Document was made in collaboration with the participants and the FAO staff of CopeMed II in Malaga and Rome.

Acknowledgements

FAO-CopeMed II acknowledges the participation and contributions of all national delegates, the indispensable contributions provided by the two donors Spain and EC, the support provided by the Spanish government to maintain the CopeMed offices in Malaga.

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ABSTRACT

The ninth meeting of the CopeMed II Coordination Committee was held in Saint Julian's (Malta), 28-29 April 2016. The annual meeting was attended by representatives of the Spanish Donor, the Secretaria General de Pesca, representatives from the countries participating in the Project (Algeria, Italy, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia), the Project Acting Coordinator and staff of the Marine and Inland Fisheries Team (FIAF) of the FAO, as well as the fishery expert of CopeMed II. The Committee reviewed the activities implemented during the inter-sessions period, discussed and adopted a proposal of priority activities for the next period of the project until the next meeting of the Coordination Committee initially foreseen in the first quarter of 2017 subject to the availability of funds. The country representatives recognized the important contributions of CopeMed II to the development of the national and regional capacity and particularly the advances in analysing data and in producing assessment of shared stocks. The regional cooperation, coordination and the key role of the project as support to increasing scientific knowledge on fishery resources such as hake, mullets, sardine, deep sea pink shrimp and dolphinfish, strengthening national expertise and regional cooperation and the valuable support to the GFCM activities were underlined.

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REPORT OF THE 9TH COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF COPEMED II

**St Julian, Malta
28-29 April 2016**

Opening of the meeting, election of the Chairperson and adoption of the Agenda

1. The Coordination Committee (CC) meeting was held in the George Urban Boutique Hotel in Malta from 28 to 29 April 2016. It was attended by representatives of the Spanish Donor (Secretaría General de Pesca), delegations from the participating countries of the Project (Algeria, Italy, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia), the Marine and Inland Fisheries Branch (FIAF), the Fisheries Experts of FAO CopeMed II, AdriaMed and MedSudMed Projects and the GFCM moderator of the Subregional Committee of SAC for the Central Mediterranean. The French delegation and the representative from the EC DG-Mare (donor) excused their participation due to different reasons. The list of participants is included in Annex 1.
2. Mr Marcelo Vasconcellos, Acting coordinator of CopeMed II, welcomed participants and thanked the Government of Malta for the collaboration in the organization of the meeting. He expressed his gratitude to the Secretaría General de Pesca of Spain and the European Commission for continuing financing the Project and thanked the participating delegates for the efforts in implementing the CopeMed II activities at national level. He highlighted the recent changes in the project's coordination, noting that since September 2015 the project has been coordinated from FAO HQ and technically operated from Malaga by Ms Pilar Hernández, who joined the project as Fishery Expert. He finally noted that despite the changes, there was a good level of implementation of priority activities identified by the previous Coordination Committee, thanks to the effort and collaboration of the participating countries and the work of CopeMed II staff.
3. Ms Andreina Fenech Farrugia, Director General for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change, welcomed participants to Malta and wished to CopeMed II a fruitful coordination committee meeting.
4. Ms Roberta Mifsud was elected chairperson of the meeting. Ms Mifsud acknowledged the historical importance of the CopeMed II project for the scientific cooperation in the Central and Western Mediterranean regions. She praised the high level of activities that were implemented by the project during the year, and thanked the participating countries and FAO for the renewed effort to work in the region.
5. The Representatives of the participating countries thanked the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture within the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change of Malta for hosting the meeting and CopeMed II Project for the continued support given through the year. Ms Encarnación Benito, representing the Secretaria General de Pesca, Spain, one of the donors of the project, expressed her thanks to Malta for hosting the meeting and to CopeMed II for the work carried out during the year. She highlighted the historical involvement of Spain as initiator and donor of the project and indicated the renewed interest of the country to continue supporting CopeMed in the near future.

Report on the CopeMed II Project's Progress

6. After adoption of the Agenda (Annex 2), CopeMed II Fishery Expert introduced item 2 based on the document FAO-CopeMed II CC08/2015/02 (Annex 3), in which the activities carried out by CopeMed II from May 2015- April 2016 were presented. She emphasized that all the activities carried out were in line with the Project objectives and the suggestions agreed during the 8th Meeting of the Coordination Committee (Malaga, 5-6 May 2015).
7. She informed that CopeMed II continued the cooperation with national delegates and the countries experts, concerning the capacity of the fisheries administrations and research institutes to generate statistical data of interest for fisheries assessment and management.
8. She reminded participants that within the CopeMed II framework on joint evaluation of the state of exploited stocks, two study groups were created in 2010 to facilitate the joint assessment of priority stocks in Alboran Sea (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04): the study groups on demersal and small pelagic stocks. In this intersessional period, the two Study groups met in October and in November 2015, both in Malaga.
9. The Study Group on small pelagic stocks in the Alboran Sea area (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04) met for its fifth time on 6-7 October 2015. It was attended by participants from Spain and Morocco while Algeria was present on-line and contributed with data for an individual assessment in the Alboran part of GSA04. Sardine was selected as the main resource in which attention should be focused in the next period in particular for the identification of stock limits. A joint assessment for sardine in GSAs 1 and 3 was prepared and presented to the GFCM small pelagics in November 2015 where it was validated.
10. The Study Group on demersal stocks of interest to Algeria, Morocco and Spain in the Alboran Sea (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04) met for the fourth time in Malaga, Spain, from 3-6 November 2015. During the meeting participants advanced on the assessment of *M. barbatus*, *M. merluccius* and *P. longirostris*. A joint assessment of *M. barbatus* in GSAs 1 and 3 was produced and submitted through the corresponding Stock Assessment Form (SAF) to the GFCM working group on demersal stocks where it was validated.
11. A technical workshop on *Coryphaena hippurus* fisheries in Western-Central Mediterranean was co-organised with MedSudMed from 16 to 18 March 2016 in Malta, hosted by the Maltese Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture within the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change. The available information on this species was updated with data from 2010 to 2015. Experts from Italy, Malta, Spain and Tunisia participated in the meeting and presented data from the traditional FADs fisheries as well as from the incidental catches by large pelagics longlines. A roadmap was drafted towards filling the gaps in knowledge and paving the way for a joint assessment. The report of the meeting was published as CopeMed II Technical Documents N°42.
12. With the aim to improve the knowledge in support the sustainable exploitation of fisheries of common interest between Algeria and Tunisia in GSAs 4 and 12, three informal meetings have been held with the collaboration of MedSudMed. The first one in the framework of the MedSudMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources held in Palermo on 14-18 September 2015. The second one was in Rome during the week of the SAC WGs on Stock assessment at the GFCM premises and a third one, held on the 8th March 2016 at the premises of the DPRH in Algiers during the week of the GFCM Regional Conference on Small Scale Fisheries. This last one was attended by the chief scientists of the teams in charge of the most important fisheries in the two countries. At that occasion, *Merluccius merluccius* and *Sardina pilchardus* were selected as priority species

and the continuation of this series of bilateral meetings with the support of CopeMed II and MedSudMed was agreed upon by participants.

13. CopeMed II Fishery Expert described the training activities that were organized by the project during the year. A training workshop on Ichthyoplankton was organized during 22-26 February 2016 in collaboration with the IEO at Málaga laboratory, Spain. It consisted of theoretical and practical session on the basic techniques for sampling, conservation and identification of fish eggs and larvae and their main applications on the assessment and management of stocks. The report of the course has been published as a CopeMed II Technical Documents N°41.
14. The project, in collaboration with EAF-Nansen Project and the INSTM, organized a training course on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) held on 11-15 April in Tunis. This five-day training workshop aimed at understanding the processes involved in the preparation and implementation of fisheries management plans under a broader vision of the fishery systems, the EAF. During the course proposals were made for specific follow up case studies on the development of national fisheries management plans in accordance with the EAF framework.
15. CopeMed II Fishery Expert also noted that the project facilitated the attendance of national experts in different technical meetings and training activities, including training activities to standardize methodologies in fishery science (MEDIAS and otoliths reading) and a training course on “R” system, the latter organised by AdriaMed and MedSudMed and FAO-FI on 7-11 September 2015 in Rome. The meeting was informed that AdriaMed is planning the organization of a follow up course on R scripts for stock assessment in the near future.
16. It was noted that to ensure synergies and optimization of resources, the implementation of project’s activities are tightly coordinated with other FAO regional projects in the Mediterranean, especially with MedSudMed giving the geographical coverage of the projects. Coordination with the GFCM is also continuously promoted to ensure that project activities can contribute to regional management priorities. It was also noted that appropriate communication is maintained with the Regional Office for North Africa and the Near East, RNE, in Cairo, the subregional office for North Africa, SNE in Tunis and the national offices in Algiers, Tunis and Rabat.
17. Regarding the communication, the Project’s website is continually updated. The FAO Mediterranean projects harmonized the information and appearance of the different websites, to present a common image to the visitor. News, information and technical documents are available from the CopeMed II website. Further to the website, CopeMed II has recently created an on-line Work Space for more direct exchange of information among the experts.
18. The Committee thanked the project for the work done and stressed the quality and the number of important results and products achieved.

Proposals on national activities in the framework of the Project.

19. National focal points were invited to comment on their proposals for priority issues in their countries needing specific support from the project.
20. The delegate of Libya expressed interest in training activities in several aspects. In particular, in relation with the future implementation of the FAO-Libya Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF), it was noted that an initial training of the experts that will be in charge of the different tasks related with fisheries would allow Libya to take maximum advantage of this FAO initiative, when it becomes operational. Libya is also interested on participating in the

Working Group on *Coryphaena*, considering the importance of the species to Libyan fisheries. He also suggested launching a new activity on the *Octopus* pot fishery in the limits of GSAs 14 and 21, in collaboration with Tunisia. In this regard, the collaboration of MedSudMed could be foreseen, considering the previous work of the project with the octopus fishery in Tunisia.

21. Tunisian delegates proposed to add *Seriola dumerili* to the working group on *Coryphaena hippurus*, provided that it is commonly associated to dolphinfish catches. They expressed also interest on carrying out a joint acoustic survey covering Eastern part of Algeria and North of Tunisia in order to cover an area of potential shared stocks with the same vessel and with the participation of Algerian experts on board. For this survey the support of the two projects CopeMed II and MedSudMed was requested.
22. Algerian delegates commented on the new structuring of the CNRDPA with the creation of teams on different topics and requested the support of CopeMed II on training activities related with the collection and treatment of socio-economic data and on standardization of protocols for surveys at sea. They also requested CopeMed II to support the participation of Mediterranean experts in the Algerian surveys. The plan of surveys scheduled will be sent to CopeMed II well in advance.
23. Commenting on the general issue of surveys, the delegates of Italy and Morocco concurred that in some cases, where data (fishery-independent biological data and socioeconomic data) is already being collected, efforts should be made first to explore the existing data before taking actions on new surveys.
24. Of particular interest to Malta are the training activities on stock assessment and management strategies evaluation and the continuation of the work on *Coryphaena hippurus*, with a view to assess the status of the stock and define common management options for this shared resource.
25. The Moroccan delegate informed the Coordination Committee that the country have an experience and expertise on the methods related to the estimation of socio-economic indicators. In some cases a first estimation can be attempted for a small set of indicators based on existing data and he offered their assistance in some training activity that could be programmed upon request of the participating countries. Small scale fisheries is also the object of a full program in Morocco. They started with monthly collection of a series of indicators of exploitation level in some sites, and plan to implement an observatory involving artisanal fishers in data collection. Recent advances in the genetic analysis of fish stocks and exploration of new fishing opportunities in rocky fishing grounds were also noted. He also informed of the interest on designating new MPAs in the Mediterranean side off Morocco. The support of CopeMed II in strengthening and consolidating some of these initiatives could be envisaged. Training interest was expressed on stock assessment and on sampling design to optimize human and financial resources.
26. In relation with the proposal for a joint acoustic survey in the Alboran Sea, Spain and Morocco concurred that they would rather explore first the definition of stock boundaries, considering the logistic and financial consequences of the proposed joint survey. Using sardine as a target, a dedicated workshop on this issue is foreseen to improve knowledge on the boundaries of the stock in the Alboran Sea and adjacent waters.
27. CopeMed II thanked the participating countries for the interventions and noted that the requests were in line with the project objectives and could contribute to an enhanced knowledge and capacity needed to support fisheries decision making in the region. Participants were reminded that the implementation of the proposed activities will depend on the availability of funds and therefore could not be asserted at the present time.

GFCM activities of relevance for CopeMed II

28. The Moderator of the GFCM Sub-regional Committee for the Central Mediterranean (SRC-CM), Ms Andreina Fenech Farrugia, provided the Committee with an overview of the new GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) structure and of the preliminary SAC work plan. She informed the participants that, in line with the decision by the Commission in its 39th session, the GFCM-SAC would test a shift from a thematic to a subregional approach during a two-year feasibility study (2015-2017). Four Sub-regional committees (SRC) were established to address a number of issues related to the work of the SAC at subregional level: the SRC for the western Mediterranean (SR-WM), the SRC for the central Mediterranean (SRC-CM), the SRC for the eastern Mediterranean (SRC-EM), and the SRC for the Adriatic Sea (SRC-AS). The objectives of the SRCs are: i) implement the work plan of the SAC at the sub-regional level (with special emphasis on the support to the implementation of subregional management plans) and ii) provide the SAC with proposals on different topics, such as advice for fisheries management and provide draft proposals for SAC work plan at subregional scale. The first meeting of the SRC-CM was held on 3-5 February 2016 (GFCM Headquarters, Rome, Italy) and mainly focused on the request of the GFCM to the SAC of providing technical advice in support of the development of a management for *P. longirostris* and *M. merluccius* fisheries. The results of the SRC-CM were discussed and endorsed at the 18th SAC session (21–23 March 2016, Nicosia, Cyprus).
29. Ms Fenech Farrugia introduced the preliminary work plan of the GFCM SAC for 2016-2017, which was adopted in the 18th SAC meeting. At the outset, she clarified that this plan will be submitted to the Commission at its 40th Session (30 May-3 June 2016, Malta) for consideration and endorsement. She presented activities planned at the regional level, for the entire Mediterranean Sea and at the sub-regional level, specifically for the Western and Central Mediterranean sub-regions. At regional level, foreseen activities concern: the marine environment ecosystems; statistic and information, i.e. the DCRF; and stock assessments. At the sub-regional level in common for all the sub-regions, activities are foreseen regarding the recreational fisheries and their interaction with small scale fisheries; the description of Mediterranean métiers; and the finalization of Guidelines on a common methodology for socio-economic analysis, in coordination with the FAO regional projects.
30. Specifically for the Western Mediterranean, the activities of the work programme included: i) training activities towards capacity-building in quantitative assessments of management scenarios; ii) capacity-building on aspects related to data collection and stock assessments; and iii) the compilation and analysis of information for the identification of stock boundaries. For the Central Mediterranean sub-region, the activities of the work programme included: i) the training on quantitative assessments of management scenarios; ii) the consolidation of bio-economic assessments of the potential impact of management measures on deep-water rose shrimp and hake trawling fisheries, incorporating better socio-economic information and simulating a wide variety of scenarios; iii) the identification of the main nursery areas for hake and deep-water rose shrimp, in addition to those already identified in GSAs 15 and 16; and iv) the assessment of the impact of the proposed temporary closure in GSA 14 on off-shore trawl fisheries targeting deep-water crustaceans. Furthermore, specifically for the Central Mediterranean subregion, activities have been foreseen to improve knowledge on the abundance, distribution and population dynamics of demersal elasmobranch species occurring in the whole area.

31. Participants were informed that GFCM and FAO Regional Projects are preparing the organization of a training course on stock assessment, to be held in Tangiers on July 2016, in collaboration with INRH. The training course will be composed of lectures and practical on-the-job training on common stock assessment methods used by experts in the Mediterranean as well as methods proposed for data-limited situations. Ms Fenech Farrugia noted that a letter from the GFCM was to be sent soon to countries asking the nomination of participants (maximum 5 per country) to take part in the course. She also informed the participants that SAC has proposed to organize a GFCM Forum on Fisheries Science (GFCM FishForum) and presented its objectives.
32. The Committee members expressed thanks for the very comprehensive presentation. In the ensuing discussion different comments were made concerning the stock assessment training course. The course was considered too ambitious, if all the proposed methods were to be covered in only four days. The large number of participants (five per country) was also considered a factor that could affect the productivity of the course. In view of the above, various suggestions were made, including the idea of focusing on only a few methods or even dedicating the training only to certain types of resources (demersal or small pelagic species). The delegates of Tunisia suggested, for instance, that if the training in Morocco concentrates on demersal stocks, another training could be organized in Tunisia dealing with the assessment of small pelagic stocks. These suggestions were to be brought to the attention of the GFCM for the preparation of detailed Terms of Reference of the planned course in Morocco.

Priority activities for the next period of CopeMed II

33. Based on the document FAO CopeMed II CC09/2016/03 and the inputs received during the meeting, CopeMed II Fishery Expert presented for discussion and adoption a proposal of activities for the next annual period of the project. Some additions to the original plan as presented in document CC09/2016/03 (Annex 4) are commented here below. The adopted workplan is presented in table 1.
34. Concerning training activities and according to the interventions made by participants, the topics that still needs to be reinforced are: i) stock assessment; ii) management strategies evaluation; iii) sampling design; and iv) socio-economic data analysis. In addition, and in particular for Algeria and Libya, there is need to reinforce the biological sampling and to launch pilot socio-economic surveys. The two countries will do specific requests to the project to better define a strategy for technical assistance, which will be carried out in close collaboration with other FAO Regional projects and the GFCM.
35. In terms of stocks assessment training, besides the course already being planned in Morocco in July 2016, in collaboration with GFCM, FAO Regional Projects and INRH, giving the large and continuous demand for capacity development in stock assessment in the region, other initiatives are to be explored in the future, including the possibility of holding regular extended training courses in combination with shorter ad hoc training on specific methodologies. In this regard, Tunisian delegates offered to host a specific training workshop on stock assessment methods for small pelagics.
36. Two species of commercial interest for Tunisia and Libya were added to the current list of species regularly assessed: *Seriola dumerili* and *Octopus vulgaris*. Dedicated sessions for these species will be included in the forthcoming working groups of *Coryphaena* and on stock assessment of demersal species of CopeMed II. The incorporation of a session dealing with sampling design was also requested to the Project. Cooperation with MedSudMed will be sought to optimize resources.

37. During the inter-Committee al period, the project will continue working in tight coordination with the other FAO Mediterranean projects by organizing joint activities, fostering participation of experts in the training activities organized by other projects and adjusting calendars of meetings among them and the GFCM. Taking advantage of our participation in different meetings and conferences, any occasion will be used as an opportunity to have informal meeting with donors, delegates from the member countries and experts.
38. Cooperation with the GFCM secretariat and its Subsidiary Bodies will continue through coordination meetings held in Rome, back-to-back in GFCM events and through on-line communication to ensure coordination in our respective mandate's tasks and to find synergies. CopeMed II will provide direct support to the activities of the GFCM by providing scientific contributions for discussion and supporting the participation of experts in annual GFCM technical and institutional meetings
39. In the framework of FAO decentralisation, CopeMed II will continue collaborating with the subregional (SNE) and regional (RNE) FAO offices in the North African and near East countries by supporting joint initiatives on fisheries and sharing information on the activities and results of the Project.
40. Project staff is planning to visit countries in this period to introduce the project to the fishery authorities and discuss on the way we can contribute to enhance the country skills in fisheries science taking into account other current initiatives to avoid overlapping.
41. The CC agreed that the priorities to be implemented during the next inter-committee period (2016-2017) should be those marked with 1 in the column of priority in table 1 always subject to the availability of funds. The other activities (marked with 2) should be implemented according specific requests by the countries to the project.

Adoption of the report

42. The Committee adopted the report. CopeMed II edited and finalized the annexes of this report which is published as a new CopeMed Technical Document.

Date and place of the next coordination Committee

43. The Committee agreed to organize the tenth Coordination Commmittee meeting in the first quarter of 2017, to be able to report its outcomes to the 19th session of SAC. Libya kindly offered the venue.

Closure

44. The delegates thanked the host country and the CopeMed Project for the organization and to the chairperson for his management of the meeting. Finally the Chairperson declared the meeting closed.

Table 1: Priority activities adopted by the 9th Coordination Committee of CopeMed II subjected to budget availability. (Priority levels: 1: high 2: medium.)

ACTIVITIES	Priority	Date/Place
1. CopeMed II-MedSudMed preparatory workshop for data revision on hake and sardine in GSA 04-E and GSA 12 and follow up activities	1	16-18 May 2016 Tunis, Tunisia
2. Training course on stock assessment in collaboration with INRH-GFCM and the FAO Regional Projects.	1	July 2016 Tangiers, Morocco
3. Training course on stock assessment of small pelagics in collaboration with INSTM and the FAO Regional Projects.	1	TBD Tunisia
4. SG on stock assessment for demersal species in the Alboran sea (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04-W).	1	Third quarter 2016 Málaga
5. A session on <i>O. vulgaris</i> in GSAs 14 and 21 could be held taking advantage of planned meetings in the framework of cooperation with MedSudMed	1	TBD
6. SG on stock assessment for the small pelagic in the Alboran sea (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04-W), including a session on sampling design.	1	Third quarter 2016, Morocco
7. Workshop to define stock boundaries for sardine in Alboran sea	1	Third quarter 2016 Málaga
8. Elaboration of distribution maps of elasmobranchs in the Western Mediterranean based on available trawl surveys data	2	During the Intersession period
9. Workshop on <i>Coryphaena hippurus</i> for preparation of data and joint stock assessment (including a session on <i>Seriola dumerili</i>), in collaboration with MedSudMed	1	March 2017 Malta
10. Facilitate participation of experts to training activities on methodologies on otoliths reading (including on-line exchange of images and attendance to ICES-IEO Wks)	2	TBD
11. On-the-job training stays at IEO as follow up of ichthyoplankton training (upon request)	2	TBD under country request
12. Assist countries on the collection and analysis of fisheries, biological and socioeconomic data, in line with GFCM DCRF schema	2	TBD under country request
13. Assist the countries to conduct surveys at sea with standardized methodologies in areas of common fisheries	2	TBD under country request
14. Support case studies for implementation of EAF tools as follow up of the training workshop (upon request by Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia)	2	TBD under country request

<p>15. Promote publications of fishery related information produced by scientist in the CopeMed sub-region, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ichthyoplankton manual - Demersal fisheries in Alboran Sea - Analysis of the results of selectivity surveys with 40 mm square mesh size. Further discussion with MedSudMed. 	2	During the intersession period
<p>16. 10th Coordination Committee.</p>	1	Libya TBC First quarter of 2017

Annex 1: List of participants

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Annex 2: Agenda

THURSDAY 28th April, 9:00-17:30

1. Opening of the meeting, election of Chairperson and Adoption of the Agenda

2. Report of the CopeMed II Project's Progress

The main activities and the Project's outputs will be presented and reviewed. Information will be given on the activities and results of the CopeMed II Working Groups, the training and the relationship and cooperation of CopeMed II at Mediterranean level.

3. Proposals on national activities in the framework of the project

The national focal points are invited to present national priorities and to propose subregional activities of common interest.

4. GFCM activities of relevance for CopeMed II

The scientific and technical activities foreseen in the FAO GFCM work plan for 2016 - 2017 will be summarised. Discussion on how the Project can contribute in a coordinated way to these activities during 2016-2017 will be held.

5. Priority activities for the next period of CopeMed II

A work plan of the Project in the cycle 2016-2017 taking into consideration, priority needs toward the national capacity building for the assessment and management of shared resources will be outlined and discussed.. The Committee will be asked to provide orientation on the program presented.

6. Other matters

FRIDAY 29th April, 11:00-13:00

7. Adoption of the report

8. Date and venue of the next Coordination Committee



Annex 3: Report on the intersessional activities of the Project CopeMed II

Report on the intersessional activities of the Project **(May 2015 - April 2016)**

Introduction

This document summarizes the activities carried out by the Project CopeMed phase II from May 2015 (Malaga, Spain. 8th Coordination Committee meeting) to April 2016, including workshops, training, research activities and the technical assistance provided to the countries, as well as the cooperation established with the donors, the GFCM and the SAC and Sub-Committees and other relevant regional institutions.

CopeMed II project, coordinated by FAO-FIAF with office in Málaga (Spain), started in February 2008 and is funded by DG Mare (UE) and the Spanish Government (Secretaría General de Pesca. Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente).

The overall objective of the project is to maintain the sustainability of the marine resources in the Central and Western Mediterranean and their ecosystems, taking into account environmental, biological, economical, social and institutional issues, and promoting scientific cooperation among the regions. Countries involved are Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Malta, Italy, France and Spain. FAO-FI, GFCM, and the two donors are also members of the Coordination Committee guiding the project.

After discussions on options to maintain the direct support of the CopeMed II project, the staff and Malaga office, FAO-FIAF signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) for the period June 2014-September 2015 with the Spanish Institute for Oceanography (IEO) as services provider in support of the CopeMed II project. The Director of IEO entrusted Mr. Camiñas, former coordinator of the project and IEO staff in Malaga, the responsibility for implementing the activities included in the LoA.

Then from September 1st 2015, Ms Pilar Hernández joined the CopeMed II project as Fisheries Expert. Ms Hernández assisted FAO with the management of the project, supporting the operational running of the project and the Malaga office, as well as providing technical assistance and guidance in the implementation of the activities approved by the project Coordination Committee. During the report period, she worked under Mr Marcelo Vasconcellos coordination and in close cooperation with the other FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects and with the GFCM.

CopeMed II conducted activities during the period May 2015 to April 2016 following proposals from the national delegates, in close coordination with FAO-FIAF responsible and according to the guidance provided by the Coordination Committee (CC) in May 2015. The work programme and recommendations of the 8th Meeting of the CopeMed II Coordination Committee were implemented according the availability of budget. 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 Project Objectives:

1. Strengthening the national capacity to obtain statistical data on catch and effort, including biological and socio-economic data.
2. Strengthening the fisheries scientific research and upgrade the research activity in the national and international context.
3. Strengthening institutional capacity at national and sub-regional levels
4. Regional coordination, cooperation and synergy
5. Project communication

1. Strengthening the national capacity to obtain statistical data on catch and effort, including biological and socio-economic data.

CopeMed II continued the cooperation with national delegates and the countries experts, concerning the capacity of the fisheries administrations and research institutes to generate statistical data of interest for fisheries assessment and management. As of the national proposals agreed during the meetings of the Coordination Committee, the actions summarized below were implemented.

Technical support to countries on statistics and information related issues

CopeMed II continued to support national experts from research institutes and fisheries administrations to finalize documents related to biological and socio-economic conditions necessary for statistical analysis of shared stocks.

Within the CopeMed II framework on joint evaluation of the state of exploited stocks, two study groups were created in 2010 to facilitate the joint assessment of priority stocks in Alboran Sea (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04) : the study groups on demersal and small pelagic stocks. In this intersessional period, the two Study groups met in October and in November 2015, both in Malaga.

2. Strengthening the fisheries scientific research and upgrade the research activity in the national and international context.

The project provided support to the national fisheries research institutes and experts facilitating the preparation of documents, provision of data and joint stock assessments. Assessment forms documents were prepared by CopeMed II and the countries and presented during the GFCM-SAC WGs in Rome, on 23-28 November 2015.

CopeMed II participated in scientific-related activities and financed the participation of **18** experts and consultants from CopeMed II area in different activities, according to requests from the national focal points and the GFCM, in different activities organized by the GFCM and by CopeMed. Efforts were focused on supporting mainly Algerian and Moroccan experts.

2.1 Subregional research activities related with shared stocks



After approval by the Coordination Committee and in collaboration with experts from the countries, CopeMed II prepared the terms of reference and the agenda for new meetings of the Study Groups of small pelagic and demersal species of the Alboran Sea between Algeria, Morocco and Spain, held in Malaga (Spain) in October and November 2015. These two groups:

- Analyzed and evaluated the state of knowledge (biology, statistics, ecology, socio-economic) and progress on the joint assessment of the status of exploited stocks of demersal and small pelagic the Alboran Sea (GSA 01, 02, 03 and 04).
- Established priorities for research priority / fish species and for joint evaluation
- Prepared recommendations for the participating research institutes, the CopeMed II Project and the GFCM and proposed a series of activities for the next intersessional period.

The Study Group on small pelagic stocks in the Alboran Sea area (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04) met for its fifth time on 6-7 October 2015. It was attended by participants from Spain and Morocco while Algeria was present on-line and contributed with data for an individual assessment in the Alborán part of GSA04. Sardine was selected as the main resource in which attention should be focused in the next period in particular for the identification of stock limits. The Group reached agreements on:

- the use of maturity scales
- a proposal for a joint acoustic survey at sea
- a roadmap for standardization of ageing through otoliths reading
- discussed about criteria for delimitation of stock units

A joint assessment for sardine in GSAs 1 and 3 was prepared and presented to the GFCM WGs in November 2015. The report of the meeting was published as CopeMed II Technical Documents N°39 and is available as *FAO-CopeMed II CC09/2016/Inf 02*

The Study Group on demersal stocks of interest to Algeria, Morocco and Spain in the Alboran Sea (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04) met for the fourth time in Malaga, Spain, from 3-6 November 2015. During the meeting participants advanced on the assessment of *M. barbatus*, *M. merluccius* and *P. longirostris*. The working group also reviewed:

- biological sampling programs
- standardization of trawl surveys at sea
- new methods for stock assessment and
- discussed about criteria for delimitation of stock units.
- agreed to prepare data for a first analysis of spatial distribution of elasmobranchs, based on trawl surveys abundance indices

A joint assessment of *M. barbatus* in GSAs 1 and 3 was produced and submitted through the corresponding Stock Assessment Form (SAF) to the GFCM working group on demersal stocks. The report of the meeting was published as CopeMed II Technical Documents N°40 and is available as *FAO-CopeMed II CC09/2016/Inf 03*

A technical workshop on *Coryphaena hippurus* fisheries in Western-Central Mediterranean was co-organised with MedSudMed from 16 to 18 March 2016. The workshop was hosted by the



Maltese Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change. The available information on this species was updated with data from 2010 to 2015 as a follow up of the previous *Coryphaena* workshop held in June 2011. Experts from Italy, Malta, Spain and Tunisia participated in the meeting and presented data from the traditional FADs fisheries as well as from the incidental catches by large pelagics longlines. The current available models suitable for this species with fast growing rates and very fluctuating recruitment dynamics were reviewed with the aim to select models for a future joint assessment in the coming years. The results of recent genetic studies funded by CopeMed II and MedSudMed evidenced the existence of a unique stock in the Mediterranean, suggesting that the assessment and further management should be done jointly by the four countries in a collaborative way. A roadmap was drafted towards filling the gaps in knowledge and paving the way for a joint assessment. The report of the meeting was published as CopeMed II Technical Documents N°41 and is available as *FAO-CopeMed II CC09/2016/Inf 05*.

With the aim to improve the knowledge in support the sustainable exploitation of fisheries of common interest between Algeria and Tunisia in GSAs 4 and 12, two informal meetings have been held with the collaboration of MedSudMed. The first one in the framework its Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources held in Palermo on 14-18 September 2015 whereby Algerian expert presented the work and structure of CNRDPA and the current sampling programs and data series available. At that occasion, the organisation of a second meeting with the participation of the chief scientists of the teams in charge of the most important fisheries in the two countries was planned. This second meeting was held on the 8th March 2016 at the premises of the DPRH in Algiers during the week of the GFCM Regional Conference on Small Scale Fisheries. The outcomes of this meeting are available as *CopeMed II CC09/2016/Inf 12*. At that occasion, priority species were selected and the continuation of this series of bilateral meetings with the support of CopeMed II and MedSudMed was agreed upon by participants.

2.2 Support the standardisation of common methodologies

The project facilitated the attendance of national experts in technical meetings or training activities to standardize methodologies in fishery science in the following topics:

- ✓ MEDIAS (Mediterranean International Acoustic Surveys), annual coordination meeting held on 5-7 April in Split (Croatia) with the aim to join and harmonize the ongoing acoustic surveys in the Mediterranean. Two Moroccan experts were funded by the Project. The Algerian expert could not participate at last due to the delay in visa.
- ✓ Otoliths reading: CopeMed II WG on small pelagics held in October 2015 in Málaga, devised a three steps roadmap to contribute to standardize age readings of small pelagic species.
 1. Otoliths images exchange among the three institutes. (INRH, CNRDPA and IEO, First quarter 2016).
 2. Otoliths images exchange at supra-regional level through online WebGR (Mediterranean and north European countries. (Last quarter of 2016).
 3. Depending of the results obtained through the two previous steps, a WK could be organized by the ICES network of small pelagics biology. (Last quarter of 2017)



At present, Morocco has participated in the first step and Algeria has expressed interest.

- ✓ Trawl surveys. The protocol of the current surveys carried out by the three Institutes was reviewed during the meeting of the CopeMed II WG on demersal species held in November 2015 in Málaga. The characteristics of vessel, gear, strata, period and species were presented by the experts of the three countries (Algeria, Morocco and Spain). Participants debated about the commonalities and differences among the three surveys, concluding that the data can be comparable if standardized to the same units (kg/km^2), since the mesh size, the vertical opening, speed and depth strata are the same in the three cases.

Training activities

One of the key objectives of CopeMed II is to create the optimal conditions for the cooperation between the different participating countries. With this aim, the scientific institutions have to be capable to work together and with other countries in the Mediterranean region following standard methodologies and principles.

CopeMed II facilitated the participation of one expert in the training course on “R” system organised by MedSudMed and FAO-FI on 7-11 September 2015 in Rome.

A training workshop on Ichthyoplankton was organized during 22-26 February 2016 in collaboration with the IEO at Fuengirola laboratory, Spain. The course was attended by 10 participants from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Spain. It consisted of theoretical and practical session on the basic techniques for sampling, conservation and identification of fish eggs and larvae and their main applications on the assessment and management of stocks. Printed material with identification sheets and the contents of the lessons was provided to the participants. The complete course manual is planned to be published as a technical document and made available for future courses. The report of the course has been published as as CopeMed II Technical Documents N°41 and is available as *FAO-CopeMed II CC09/2016/Inf 04*.

The project CopeMed in collaboration with EAF-Nansen Project and the INSTM organized a training course on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) held on 11-15 April in Tunis. This five-day training workshop aimed at understanding the processes involved in the preparation, and implementation of fisheries management plans under a broader vision of the fishery systems, the EAF. It was attended by 20 experts from the administration and research coming from Algeria, Guinee, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia. The course consisted on theoretical lessons to explain the main concepts of the EAF and the components of the fishery system and practical sessions in which participants worked with real data from fisheries of national interest: Small pelagics in Morocco, Sardine in Gulf of Ghazaouet in Algeria, red shrimp in GSAs 1 and 2 in Spain and trawl fishery of shrimps in the Gulf of Gabès, in Tunisia. The course ended up with a series of proposals of pilot cases to be developed in the next year with the support of CopeMed II and requested the project to transmit this proposals to the 9th Coordination Committee: Artisanal fisheries in the lagoon of El Biban, and eel fishery in the lagoon of Tunis in Tunisia, artisanal fishery in an MPA in Algeria, and small pelagics in Alboran sea. The report of this workshop is available as *FAO-CopeMed II CC09/2016/Inf 06*.



The project Fishery Expert participated as lecturer in the International Master on Management and Sustainable Fisheries sharing experiences about cooperation in Mediterranean and the role of RFMOs. The Master is jointly organized by the University of Alicante, the Spanish General Secretariat of the Sea and the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), through the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza (IAMZ). The Project has been offered to coordinate the work of a Master thesis of a Moroccan scientist who would work on demersal fisheries in Alboran Sea.

3. Strengthening institutional capacity at national and sub-regional levels

As part of this objective, CopeMed II continued to work in 2015-16 with the fisheries administrations of the project's countries and the productive and research sectors, with other FAO projects in the Mediterranean, GFCM and other regional representatives in various fisheries and marine issues. CopeMed II participated and financed the participation of experts and consultants from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Spain in different scientific and training activities as reported in this document. In many of these occasions, the project has promoted and held open dialogue with the scientists and administrations representatives present at those events on topics of interest and about the implementation of project activities in their countries.

CopeMed II maintained the fishery administrations, main fisher's organizations and other stakeholders informed by distributing information generated by the project (meeting agendas and documents, technical and occasional documents), information from others sources (courses, meeting, documents, jobs opportunities) through the web page of the project and by mail distribution lists.

4. Regional coordination, cooperation and synergy

4.1 Cooperation and support to GFCM

FAO Mediterranean subregional projects, including CopeMed II, supports regularly the GFCM activities in close collaboration with national focal points of the countries participating in the project and the Commission' Secretariat by providing scientific contributions for discussion and by funding the participation. These efforts of CopeMed II (in FAO staff workload, funds and time, but also providing GFCM meeting with the countries participation, input from experts from the south Mediterranean and information and data provided by the countries and/or the project) represent a clear support to the countries but also a true support to the GFCM and the FWP.

CopeMed II reinforced the contacts and discussion with the GFCM staff on several question related with the sub-region, the CopeMed II members and the activities organised by the Commission for better coordination and collaboration. In fact, CopeMed supported the GFCM and the countries during the reporting period in different regional activities, facilitating the regional participation of the countries and disseminating documents, data, knowledge and ideas of its national experts to the international GFCM arena. The activities of the GFCM supported by CopeMed II and actions by CopeMed include:

- ✓ The GFCM Working Group on small pelagic held in Rome on 23-27 November 2015 allowed the presentation of the assessment of the sardine (*S. pilchardus*) of GSAs 01 and 03



- Alboran Sea, conducted by experts from Algeria (CNRDPA), Morocco (INRH) and Spain (IEO) under the small pelagic CopeMed II WG.
- ✓ GFCM The Working Group on demersals was held in parallel in Rome. It allowed the presentation of the evaluation of the mullet (*M. barbatus*) of GSAs 01, 03 and 04 in the Alboran Sea, conducted by experts from Algeria (CNRDPA), Morocco (INRH) and Spain (IEO) under CopeMed II WG.
 - ✓ Intersessional meeting of the Compliance Committee (CoC). 19 - 20 January, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy
 - ✓ Workshop on bioeconomic assessment of management measures 1 February, GFCM HQ, Rome Italy
 - ✓ Subregional Committees for the Adriatic Sea (SRC-AS) and Central Mediterranean (SRC-CM), February 2 - 5 February, GFCM HQ, Rome Italy
 - ✓ Regional Conference on “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” 7 - 9 March, Algiers, Algeria. The Project contributed with a case study entitled “**Involvement of fishers on standardized data collection in SSF and development of complementary activities to improve community livelihoods**” based on the experience of ArtFiMed Project in Tunisia and Morocco. The study was praised by the participants and contributed to stimulate discussions and to draw conclusions of the thematic Panel 1: “Supporting the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea under the Blue Growth perspective”. The member countries and the Acting Coordinator of CopeMed II participated at the 18th Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee in Rome (Nicosia, Cyprus 21-23 March 2016)

4.2 FAO internal coordination

Coordination between the four regional FAO projects in the Mediterranean (AdriaMed, CopeMed II, MedSudMed and EastMed) has been consolidated and common activities are carried out to strengthen synergies in international areas and sub- regional. CopeMed II interacts with other regional projects in the Mediterranean based in FAO headquarters in Rome (AdriaMed, MedSudMed and EastMed) and with regional and subregional offices of FAO for the Mediterranean in Cairo and Tunis respectively and the national offices in Algiers, Tunis and Rabat.

To ensure coordination, all projects are represented at the annual meetings of the Coordination Committee of the other projects. Coordination and exchange of information and human resources has enabled a significant increase in the number and importance of the activities organized jointly or shared.

In particular, in the period here reported, CopeMed II and MedSudMed collaborated in:

- ✓ MedSudMed – CopeMed II Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources in Palermo on 14-18 September 2015
- ✓ Bilateral Meeting between Algeria and Tunisia on Fisheries Resources in Western and Central Mediterranean (GSA 04 and GSA 12) in Algiers on 8 March 2016
- ✓ CopeMed II-MedSudMed Technical Workshop on *Coryphaena hippurus* Fisheries in the Western-Central Mediterranean in Malta on 16- 18 March 2016



4.3 Coordination with the donors

CopeMed II in cooperation with FAO-FIAF service maintained the activities of coordination and contacts with the current donors of the project, the European Commission and the Spanish Government.

European Commission: Directorate general for maritime affairs and fisheries

The project drafted documents for FAO-FI to support the preparation of the Grant Application for year 7 and has interacted with the representatives of EU-DG Mare in several occasions during the GFCM working Groups (November 2015), Sub-Regional Committees (February 2016) and the Regional Conference on Small Scale Fisheries (March 2016). In all the three events, the feedback was very positive and the prospective for next period financing are good.

Spain: Secretaría General de Pesca. Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente

The Project staff maintained close communication (telephone, email and letters) with representatives of the government of Spain, in particular with the General Secretariat of Maritime Fisheries (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, MAGRAMA).

The Ministry has been informed by the FAO and the project of all activities undertaken and the problems faced in 2015, mainly due to political tensions in the region.

Communications with various units of the General Secretariat of Maritime Fisheries was maintained on:

- the creation of " CopeMed on line workspace" to strengthen the communication of the experts networks,
- preparing priority activities relating to shared stocks such as balckspot seabream assessment between Morocco and Spain and small pelagics in Aboran Sea.
- organization of a first meeting of Fisheries Managers. This meeting has been postponed while the pilot phase of the GFCM-SAC sub regional approach is being tested, to avoid possible duplicities or overlapping.

COMMON ACTIVITIES AND OVERALL COORDINATION

All the FAO-led Fisheries Management Support projects in the Mediterranean are tightly coordinated and develop their activities in a joint way, among them and with the GFCM, whenever this can bring added benefits to the participating countries and the GFCM.

During the intersessional period, the projects co-organized several Working Groups, Workshops and Training Courses. This co-organization not only promotes the best use of limited human and financial resources, it also contributes to increase the linkages and connections among the fisheries researchers and managers of the whole Mediterranean. It is expected that the connections thus established, and the common language and methods shared, will also contribute to facilitating the reinforcement of the regional and sub-regional cooperation frameworks considered essential for sustainable fisheries management in the Mediterranean in the GFCM framework.



Also, the projects harmonized the information and appearance of the different websites, to present a unified image to the visitors, reinforcing the concept of harmonized projects.

The tight coordination avoids overlap in activities and facilitates the planning of joint activities. Also, the projects staff met all together twice yearly, once at FAO Headquarters and another at the GFCM Regional Committees meetings, to take stock of the development of the activities and problems faced by each of them, and to plan the joint or shared activities. Also, the projects staff met all together twice yearly, once at FAO Headquarters and another at the GFCM Regional Committees meetings, to take stock of the development of the activities and problems faced by each of them, and to plan the joint or shared activities. This tight coordination and sharing of information and resources has already led to a significant increase in the number and importance of jointly-organised or shared activities, as is evident in this report. It also means that the total number of activities implemented has effectively increased, as the specific advantages (human or otherwise) of each project is put at the disposal of all the projects, and there was no duplication of efforts, reducing the wastage of resources.

5. Project communication

CopeMed II contributed to keep experts, research institutions, fisheries administrations, main fisher's organisations and other stakeholders informed on fisheries and marine-related issues by distributing information generated by the project: meeting agendas, technical documents, meeting reports and occasional papers. Furthermore, the project publishes information from others sources (courses, meeting, documents, jobs opportunities) through the website, which is regularly updated and by post.

The FAO Mediterranean projects harmonized the information and appearance of the different websites, to present a unified image to the visitors. A general description of the Project is available, as well as information on the recent or forthcoming events organized by CopeMed II and the Mediterranean Regional Projects.

To contribute to the communication of the CopeMed II experts networks, further to the website, CopeMed II has recently created an on-line Work Space for more direct exchange of information among the experts. These Work Space contains a series of portals (sharepoints) for each of the most regular permanent working groups. Up to present, 6 of these portals have been created and are managed by the CopeMed II fishery expert:

1. Working Group on Stock Assessment of Demersal species in Alborán Sea
2. Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagics species in Alborán Sea
3. Ichthyoplankton training workshop
4. Dolphinfish fisheries in Western Mediterranean
5. Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
6. Coordination Committee meeting

They are based on Sharepoint technology and are hosted within the GFCM on-line environment. Privacy and limited access to these portals is granted only to members of the CopeMed II working groups by login credentials assigned by the CopeMed II staff upon request.



All the Technical Documents and Occasional Papers produced are published and made available on the Project web site as pdf files, www.faocopemed.org.

Annex 4: Proposal of Priority Activities for the next Year

This document aims to suggest to the Coordination Committee members elements for discussion on the Project Work Programme for the next inter-Committee period, (2016-2017).

CopeMed Phase II started as of February 2008 to build on the results obtained during the first phase (1996-2005). The objective of CopeMed II is to maintain the sustainability of the marine fisheries in the Central and Western Mediterranean Sea and its ecosystem, taking into consideration environmental, biological, economical, social and institutional issues. In addition, the project is contributing to strengthen and improving the regional balanced cooperation by supporting the participation of the countries in regional scientific working groups particularly those related with shared stocks assessment and in those working groups and statutory activities included in the annual program of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and by improving the collaboration, coordination and synergies with the other subregional FAO Mediterranean projects focused on fisheries sustainability.

CopeMed phase II aims at: (i) strengthening the national capacity to obtain fisheries statistical data; (ii) Strengthening the fisheries scientific research; and (iii) Strengthening institutional capacity for the final aim of the sustainability of fisheries in the region in the most coordinated way with other Projects and with the GFCM.

The project is executed by the Marine and Inland Fisheries Team (FIAF) of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division of FAO. The Acting Coordinator is based in Rome and the staff: fishery expert recruited in September 2015 and clerk are based in Málaga, Spain. As in previous years, the coordination and synergy in organizing joint activities and share human and financial resources with the other FIAF Projects of the different Mediterranean regions (AdriaMed, MedSudMed and EastMed) will be a priority to CopeMed II. Moreover the annual activities planned are integrated and will contribute to the development of the GFCM Framework Programme (2013-2018) and the different mandates and recommendations prepared by the GFCM.

The final annual Workplan 2016-2017 that should be adopted by the CC of CopeMed II, will take also in consideration the proposals and recommendations of the national members during the 9th Coordination Committee meeting, in accordance with the regional priorities expressed by the countries on the main components and according to budget availability.



CopeMed Phase II. 2016-17 Workplan

In order to facilitate the presentation of the Workplan the proposed activities are organized in relation to the four main axes of the project:

1. Strengthening the national capacity to obtain statistical data on catch and effort, including biological and socio-economic data.

The Project, under request of countries will assist national institutions to put in place or further develop data collection programs to fill the existing gaps. The aim of this action is to contribute with technical and financial support to comply in time and format with the data reporting obligations set at national and regional levels and to maintain complete databases and information systems owned by the relevant national institutions. Taking into account the outcomes of technical meetings held during 2015-2016, specific activities may address the following fisheries and topics.

Hake, mullets, shrimps and sardine are among the most important species in which attention should be focused in the near future according to SAC and as agreed by experts. Based on the review of the current sampling programs done in 2015 during the relevant CopeMed II WGs, there would be need to: i) improve the sampling frequencies (monthly); ii) increase the parameters measured (length, weight, sex) and; iii) to extend the sampling period to the whole year where this is not the case. The Project can assist technically and financially to increase the general coverage of the data collection programs.

The integration of socio-economic data is also a priority. The project can support actions aiming at enhancing national capacity for the collection and processing of this type of data. Socio-economic surveys can be launched under countries request for specific fisheries as a pilot phase and then extend it to a wider area, more fleet segments and species.

2. Strengthening the fisheries scientific research and upgrade the research activity in the national and international context.

2.1. Research activities related with shared stocks

- CopeMed II SG on stocks assessment for demersal species in the Alborán sea (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04 West):

It is suggested that priority be given to the following species:

- *M. merluccius*
- *P. longirostris*
- *Mullus spp.*

The SAC-WGSAD established *Merluccius merluccius* as priority for 2016-17 and recommended that the assessment of the stocks in the three GSAs, individually, and also jointly should be carried out and the results compared.



New data will be provided for the other two species (*P. longirostris* and *Mullus spp.*) that will be reviewed and standardized. Preliminary exercises of model running will be performed and the corresponding report will be produced.

In addition, the relevant technical WGs of 2015 recommended that the CopeMed II WG on *P. bogarveo* in GSAs 01 and 03 should continue in order provide updated advice on the status of the stock(s), which was considered critical in 2014.

- CopeMed II WG on stocks assessment for small pelagic species in the Alborán sea (GSAs 01, 02, 03 and 04 West):
It is suggested that priority be given to the following species:
 - *Sardina pilchardus*: Recommendations from the SAC- WGSASP will be taken into consideration. Biological parameters will be compiled and new models will be tested.
 - *Engraulis encrasicolus*: new data will be provided, standardization and preliminary assessments can be tested.
- Follow up of the “Bilateral Meeting between Algeria and Tunisia on Fisheries Resources in Western and Central Mediterranean (GSA 04-E and GSA 12)” held in Algiers on 8 March 2016. One of the recommendations of this meeting was that CopeMed II and MedSudMed co-organize a preparatory workshop for data revision and standardization on priority species in May in Tunisia in collaboration with MedSudMed. (Report available as *CopeMed II CC09/2016/Inf 12*)
- Elasmobranchs species: The CopeMed II -MedSudMed technical Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources in South-Central Mediterranean held in Palermo in September 2015 proposed to produce cartographic material for this vulnerable species based on data from existing trawl surveys. CopeMed II obtained the agreement of all the research institutes in the Western Mediterranean (Algeria, Morocco, France and Spain) to share this information for selected years and is ready to produce these maps. As the collection of landings data at species level is still missing in some countries, the project under request could help on reinforcing the sampling networks including training data collectors to fill this gap, as recommended by the SAC.
- Follow up on *Coryphaena hippurus*: the success of the workshop (WK) co-organised with MedSudMed in Malta last March reflected by the number of participants from all the concerned countries and the amount of data and information provided, encouraged the Projects and the participants to continue working on this species. During the WK, a medium term (1- 2 years) work- plan was devised which is included as appendix I to this document. The aim of the work plan is to progress towards the assessment of the stock and to evaluate potential management options to be discussed in the GFCM arena. One of the proposed activities is the organization of a Workshop on *Coryphaena hippurus* assessment and management in Western-Central Mediterranean in 2017, with draft Terms of Reference also included in Appendix I. The consolidation of a stable CopeMed II Working Group on *C. hippurus* that would meet on a regular basis and that would interact through the on-line platform recently established was recommended also by the WK.



- Progress on the identification of stock boundaries: the Project will continue supporting activities that can provide evidences for the delimitation of stocks in its area of competence, in particular in the Alborán sea. In addition and, if possible, in collaboration with MedSudMed, also in the eastern area of GSA04 for both demersal and small pelagics species. A preliminary desk study on comparison of biological parameters could provide elements for discussion in a dedicated workshop to be organized in the framework of the respective Projects' Stock Assessment Working Groups (*i.e.*: last quarter of 2016). Genetic analysis as performed already by the projects to other species (*e.g.*: *Octopus*, *Coryphaena*) can be replicated to new species and areas. Other techniques as morphometry, microchemistry and tropho-dynamics can be combined towards this delimitation of stocks.

2.2 Support the standardization of common methodologies

The project will facilitate the attendance of national experts to technical meetings or training activities to standardize methodologies in fishery such as the annual coordination meetings of the acoustic (MEDIAS) and trawl (MEDITS) surveys. Furthermore, the Project can support the participation of experts in the surveys of the other countries upon request.

- Trawl surveys: The comparison of MEDITS protocols in the three countries done during the CopeMed II WG of demersal species in November 2015, resulted in much more commonalities than differences. The lack of differences on the technical characteristics of the gear and procedures, facilitates the comparison of data if abundance indices are standardized to the same units (kg/km^2). However, an intercalibration exercise that could be supported by the Project has not been carried out so far.
- Acoustic surveys: MEDIAS protocol is also common to the three countries in the Alborán area, however the differences found in the period of the year, the depths covered and the important gaps in geographical coverage occurring in the northern side makes impossible the combination and or comparison of data in the whole area. For this reason and also to contribute to the identification of shared stocks, the experts participating regularly in the CopeMed II WGs have suggested in different occasions the organisation of a joint acoustic survey, with the same boat in a period still to be decided and for duration of about 10-15 days that would cover the northern and southern coasts of the Alboran Sea.
- Otoliths reading: CopeMed II WG on small pelagics held in October 2015 in Málaga, defined three steps roadmap to contribute to standardize age readings of small pelagic species.
 4. Otoliths images exchange among the three institutes. (INRH, CNRDPA and IEO, First quarter 2016).
 5. Otoliths images exchange at supra-regional level through online WebGR (Mediterranean and north European countries). (Last quarter of 2016).
 6. Depending of the results obtained through the two previous steps, a WK could be organized by the ICES network of small pelagics biology. (Last quarter of 2017)



At present, Morocco has participated in the first step and Algeria has expressed interest. The second and, (if necessary) third steps are still to be done with the participation of experts funded by the Project.

3. Strengthening institutional capacity at national and sub-regional levels

The Project will continue to support the strengthening of national expertise through the implementation of specific training with the aim to build a common ground for fisheries science. Training workshops and on-the-job training activities will be organised in different topics according to the needs expressed by this Committee and trying to cover all steps in the fishery science, from sampling and processing of data to stock assessment and management options.

Training activities

In particular, activities foreseen for the coming period include:

- Joint GFCM-INRH-CopeMed II training workshop on stock assessment methods, Tangiers, Morocco, July 2016. In collaboration with the GFCM and the INRH a 5 days course will be organized with lecturers who are models specialists to train experts in the most current stock assessment methods in the Mediterranean region. Practical sessions with real data are foreseen.
- Ichthyoplankton research stays of scientists from South Mediterranean countries at the IEO laboratories in Gijón, Majorca and Málaga to participate in oceanographic cruises and to continue the laboratory training on identification, age determination and trophic interactions for the main commercial species. In addition, IEO experts can participate on future surveys carried out on joint cooperation activities.
- Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, as a follow-up to the EAF training workshop (Tunis, April 2016, see report as *FAO-CopeMed II CC09/2016/Inf 06*), potential case studies were proposed for the application of EAF in the development of national fisheries management plans: Tunisia: artisanal fisheries in the lagoon of El Biban, and eel fishery in the lagoon of Tunis; Algeria: artisanal fishery in an MPA (to be defined) and small pelagics fishery in the Alboran Sea. The support of the project during the first year of development of these case studies is foreseen.
- Pilot Socio-economic surveys and data processing for the estimation of indicators upon request.

4. Regional coordination, cooperation and synergy

During the inter-Committee al period, the project will continue working in tight coordination with the other FAO Mediterranean projects by organizing joint activities, fostering participation of experts in the training activities organized by other projects and adjusting calendars of



meetings among them and the GFCM. In coordination with the other FAO projects, CopeMed II will prepare the annual Report of activities and main achievements for the SAC and the GFCM.

The communication with the scientists of the national institutes is permanent and fluid for planning and organization of the working groups, to discuss of the Project's activities, their current research projects and to find synergies and benefits to all members. In the framework of FAO decentralisation, CopeMed II will continue collaborating with the subregional (SNE) and regional (RNE) FAO offices in the North African and near East countries by supporting joint initiatives on fisheries and sharing information on the activities and results of the Project.

Taking advantage of our participation in different meetings and conferences, any occasion will be used as an opportunity to have informal meeting with donors, delegates from the member countries and experts.

Country visits: Project staff is planning to visit countries in this period to introduce the project to the fishery authorities and discuss on the way we can contribute to enhance the country skills in fisheries science taking into account other current initiatives to avoid overlapping.

Meetings with the donors, Secretaría General de Pesca of Spain and the representative of EU-DGMare will be held during this inter-Committee period.

Cooperation with the GFCM secretariat and its Subsidiary Bodies will continue through coordination meetings held in Rome, back-to-back in GFCM events and through on-line communication to ensure coordination in our respective mandate's tasks and to find synergies. CopeMed II will provide direct support to the activities of the GFCM by providing scientific contributions for discussion and supporting the participation of experts in annual GFCM technical and institutional meetings.

5. Project communication

In order to keep experts, research institutions, fisheries administrations, main fisher's organisations and other stakeholders informed on fisheries and marine-related issues, the website of the project will be continuously updated with the different events, documents and news. The Project also foresees participation in external meetings, conferences and seminars to disseminate our products and search for synergies with other projects and institutions working for the fisheries in the Region. Printed material is being reduced in line with the FAO policy of environmental respect, but still some relevant technical documents can be printed and distributed upon request.

Communication of the CopeMed II experts' networks on specific topics will be reinforced thanks to the on-line Work Space based on SharePoint. Up to present six of these portals have been created and are managed by the CopeMed II fishery expert. More portals will be created according to possible emerging needs.

The Project will continue promoting publication of scientific papers produced by scientist in the CopeMed II sub-region on shared stocks, assessment methodologies marine species and its ecosystems. In particular two publications are planned for the next inter-Committee period:

- Demersal fisheries in Alborán Sea. This study had already been discussed and recommended by several experts meetings. It was postponed due to the lack of time of the



proposed experts and the dedication of CopeMed II staff to priority activities. This year thanks to the collaboration with the University of Alicante in the International Master on Management and Sustainable Fisheries, the Project has received offers of collaboration by Master students preparing their thesis on topics that could be of interest to CopeMed II countries. The identification of species to be included and the questions to be answered is still open, but as suggestion, some issues that could be of interest are: Comparison of some indicators (biological or socio-economic) in the three countries, estimation of by-catch and/or discards and mitigation measures, estimation of potential conflicts between artisanal and industrial fisheries, among others.

- Manual on identification techniques for Ichthyoplankton. As a follow up of the course held in February 2016 in IEO, Málaga, the project is producing a Manual containing the techniques used during the course and identification sheets for the most common commercial species in Western-Central Mediterranean.

All the Technical Documents and Occasional Papers produced will be made available on the Project web site as pdf files, www.faocopemed.org.

Appendix I

Proposal for a medium-term research work plan for *C. hippurus*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
1.Improve the knowledge on biological parameters	- Compile and review biological parameters from the different research works in progress
	- Conduct comparative studies of values and methods used by the different teams, including trough research stays.
2.Improve knowledge on the life history and spatial dynamics of the species from early stages to adulthood.	- Harmonise and adapt existing ichthyoplankton surveys to optimise <i>Coryphaena</i> larval collection.
	- Promote a pilot tagging program for dolphinfish in the whole region. Consider possibilities with ICCAT and GFCM and with the fishers and recreational anglers associations.
3.To get reliable estimation of stock size and reference points for fishing pressure	- To collect data from other gears than FADs (Catch-effort, size distribution) from all possible sources including recreational fisheries in order to cover all sizes range.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect catch also in numbers of fish - Measure of effort in the agreed units (either number of trips as the minimum or number of FADs visited by day and boat) - A new WK is proposed focusing on data and methods for stock assessment
4. Identify socioeconomic indicators that drive the fishery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compile and review existing data. - Follow up of trends of these indicators (prices, jobs, market)
5. Disentangle the effects of environmental factors and fisheries on the recruitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with the CERES project in providing data that facilitates the elaboration of models.

Continuation of proposal for a medium-term research work plan for *C. hippurus*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
6. Reduce the FADs impact on the environment while maintaining or improving the profitability of the fishery.	- Assess the actual impact of FADs structure on the environment.
	- Estimate the critical number of FADs taking into account the spatial component of the FADs catches.
	- Promote the practice of removing FADs by fishermen after the season and explore environmental friendly material for the FADs.
7. Confirm recent studies on stock identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect samples to study genetic variations at the subregional scale (Gulf of Cadiz and Canary Islands, Eastern Mediterranean) - Use the most powerful markers like SNPs or microsatellites.

Draft Terms of Reference for a Workshop on *Coryphaena hippurus* assessment and management in Western-Central Mediterranean



February-March 2017 (Venue TBD)

1. Comparative analysis of biological parameters
 2. Provision of series of landings and effort from all available gears.
 3. Revision of Stock assessment methods for this species in other parts of the world (invite external experts)
 4. Preparation of data for some of the models selected
 5. Start an assessment exercise
 6. Comparative analysis of management measures
 7. Discuss on management options
- Algeria, Libya, Morocco and others will be invited to participate.



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