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Closing session in each area in Tunisia, Italy and Spain

## **Discussing final fishing management guidelines during the closing sessions of the ECOSAFIMED project**

**Press Release**

- The ECOSAFIMED project of the ENPI CBC MED programme, coordinated by the Biodiversity Foundation of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, promotes responsible practices in artisanal fisheries and the conservation of benthic ecosystems in the Mediterranean basin.
- During the last month, each project partner organised closing sessions to discuss drafted management guidelines with fishermen and governmental institutions, with the aim of signing marine stewardship agreements to adopt these best practices on a voluntary basis.

**02 December 2015**

Within the framework of the Mediterranean Programme for Cross-Border Co-operation, the ECOSAFIMED project has been implemented in La Galite archipelago and Esquerquis banks (Tunisia) by The National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies, in Cap of Creus and Menorca Channel (Spain) by the Institute of Marine Sciences (Spain), and in Pontine archipelago and the Gulf of Patti (Italy) by the University of Genoa.

The ENPI ECOSAFIMED project aims to analyse the traditional coastal fishing sector - in the mentioned areas - to evaluate its impact on the marine ecosystem. Based on scientific evidences reached during these 2 years of project implementation, general management guidelines are provided for all artisanal

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fleets, as well as recommendations tailored to each study area given the specific feature of each region. These recommendations would help preserving the marine benthic communities in the basin; therefore, they would contribute to the conservation of the Mediterranean seabed and to the sustainability of the fishing activity.

For the successful completion of the project, a participative approach has been developed to involve all stakeholders in the decision making process addressing key socio-economic and environmental challenges in the fishing sector. In fact, each partner has organized meetings both in the beginning (launching sessions) and at end of the project (closing sessions).

These meetings provide fishermen and associated institutions with a unique opportunity to gather, take stock of the results of the project and discuss the drafted recommendations. The final objective is the signing of agreements to adopt the best practices on a voluntary basis and in the long term. During each meeting, representatives of all regional stakeholders in the fishing sector are called on to attend: fishermen, cooperatives, professionals, researchers and representatives from associations as well as from the administration.

In Italy, Marzia Bo, the Italian coordinator from UNIGE, has organized in both Ponza and Patti areas a preliminary meeting with fishermen to set the basis for the Marine Stewardship Agreement. Then, closing session has been organized in the same areas on the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, respectively.

During the meeting, the attendees have also discussed the signature of one marine stewardship agreement, a moral and voluntary long-term agreement based on the joint agreed recommendations.

This initiative was a unique opportunity to become aware of the necessity of the cooperation among all stakeholders in the artisanal fishing sector in order to rationalize the exploitation, thus ensuring the sustainability of the sector and the preservation of marine benthic communities.

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Overall, these meetings will allow over 100 fishermen in the three countries to increase their awareness about the amazing richness of their marine biodiversity and the impacts of their activity on the seabed, and to agree on the adoption of the drafted responsible fishing practices to sustain their activity.

In Spain, closing sessions will be organized in the Balears and Cap of Creus on the third week of December by David Diaz, the scientific coordinator. In Tunisia they will be carried out by Adel Gaamour, the Tunisian coordinator, in Tabarka, Kelibia and Bizerte.

### **ECOSAFIMED AND THE ENPI CBC MED PROGRAMME**

With a budget of €1.9 million, the ECOSAFIMED project promotes responsible fishing practices and communication between researchers and the artisanal fishing sector, with the aim of helping to conserve marine ecosystems. The ultimate objective of the project is to produce a series of recommendations for managing the artisanal fisheries studied in the Mediterranean, to ensure their compatibility with good conservation practices for marine habitats.

The project also seeks to identify valuable areas to be proposed as Protected Marine Areas under the auspices of European Directives and/or the Barcelona Convention. ECOSAFIMED is one of the 39 projects to have received funding from the 1,095 projects presented at the second call for the 2007-2013 ENPI CBC MED Programme.

The ENPI Mediterranean Sea Programme is a cross-border co-operation initiative that forms part of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The programme's aim is to promote co-operation between regions on both shores of the Mediterranean, in order to tackle common challenges and assess endogenous potentials.

A total of 14 countries, representing 76 regions and close to 110 million inhabitants, have benefited from the programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy,



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Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, the Palestinian Authority, Portugal, Spain, Syria and Tunisia.

The programme has a budget of €200 million, funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, and the contribution to each project amounts to a maximum of 90 per cent of the total cost.

The projects funded deal with a range of issues relating to promoting socioeconomic and territorial development: supporting innovation and research; sustainable development and energy efficiency throughout the Mediterranean Sea Basin; improving conditions and the various forms of movement of persons, goods and capital; and promoting dialogue between cultures and forms of governance.

Information on the ECOSAFIMED project and the ENPI CBC MED Programme is available on the [ENPI CBC MED](#) and the [EuropeAid Office of Development and Cooperation](#) websites.

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Further information:

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