

Newsletter nº 1

Presentation of the ECOSAFIMED project	1
Goals and results	2
Interview with the project director	3
ECOSAFIMED events	4

ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE ARTISANAL FISHERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

The "Ecosystem conservation and sustainable artisanal fisheries in the Mediterranean basin (ECOSAFIMED)" project is part of the European Programme ENPI Mediterranean Basin (ENPI CBC MED 2007-2013) and it aims to promote responsible fisheries and the conservation of marine biological resources in a cross border cooperation initiative implemented in three Mediterranean countries – Spain, Italy and Tunisia – and co-financed by the European Union.

A general assumption is that still exist benthic communities relatively well preserved in zones exploited only by artisanal fleets, and that they are richer in biodiversity.



The complexity of benthic communities studied is leaded by key forming species, sponges and gorgonians, which will be the objective species to evaluate in the video footage obtained during the field surveys

Since the impact of trawl-fishing on benthic communities is well-known, ECOSAFIMED proposes to study the impact of artisanal fisheries on shelf areas with low and high trawling pressure. The richness of these communities depends on the so-called ecosystem engineer species (e.g. corals, sponges or, among others).

They provide a three-dimensional habitat structure and significantly increase biodiversity and productivity creating breeding, feeding and shelters for an important number of species of commercial value.

With the aim to sustain an artisanal fishing activity in areas preserved from the trawling pressure and ensure the maintenance of acceptable practices compatible with the good environmental status of the benthic communities in the Mediterranean basin, the project will produce management guidelines based on sound scientific evidences.

The project actions will be implemented between 30th December 2013 and 31st December 2015. The ECOSAFIMED project total budget is 1.91 million € of which 81% is financed by the European Union (ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme) through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. The project will be implemented by four public entities representing the public administration and the scientific sectors from three Mediterranean countries involved, Italy, Tunisia and Spain.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment of Spain, through the Biodiversity Foundation is coordinating the initiative. The other partners are the Spanish Research Council - Institute of Marine Sciences (Spain), the University of Genoa (Italy) and the National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies - INSTM (Tunisia).



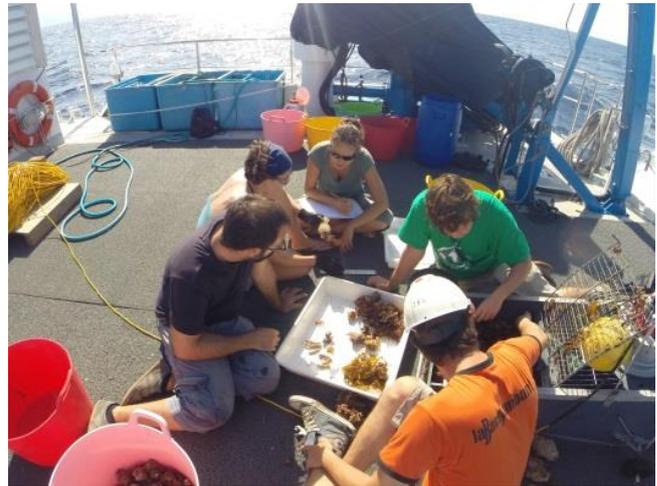
The project evaluates the activity and impact of artisanal fleet over the benthic communities. ECOSAFIMED is focused on different métiers of artisanal fleet: trammel nets, longlines and fish nets.

GOALS AND RESULTS

The project aims to contribute to the Action plan (2008/56/EC) for an integrated maritime policy in the Mediterranean by promoting sustainable fishing practices over the benthic communities and promoting the information exchange about good practices between stakeholders in order to achieve the conservation of habitats.

Actions foreseen in the project are:

1. Locate areas between 60 to 120 meters depth of continental shelf without trawler fishing activity and where artisanal fisheries fish in Spain, Italy and Tunisia and delimitation of those areas.
2. Determine dynamics of artisanal fisheries and identify local métiers (combination of fishing gear, target species, geographical area) which are present in the study areas.
3. Assess impact of artisanal fisheries on seabed and benthic communities by conducting surveys with fishermen and remote-operated vehicles. Determine the conservation state of seabed ecosystems applying Marine Strategy Framework Directive methodology.
4. Propose to local artisanal fleet recommendations and possible actions from the results for reconciling fisheries and ensuring the conservation of benthic communities.
5. Detect ecologically valuable areas for conservation and protection to be proposed as protected marine areas under the European Directives and / or the Barcelona Convention. The project will involve fishermen and stewardship entity (Biodiversity Foundation) to suggest management guidelines and potential protected marine areas based on sound scientific evidences. Furthermore it will develop an integrated Geographic Information System database (GIS) with the compiled information with a specific cartography of each area integrating the existing data from previous projects and the information obtained from the results of ECOSAFIMED.



Classifying samples during the field survey in Balearic Islands.



The Remote Operate Vehicle (ROV) is used to evaluate the status of the benthic areas surveyed during the field surveys carried out in the 3 involved countries.

Project areas

The project actions will be implemented in the following areas in the three countries involved: Catalonia and Balearic Islands in Spain; Ponza and Patti in Italy; and Eskerquis bank and La Galite, in Tunisia



The impact of long lines and nets is higher over the key forming species, and a long term negative effect is detected on the structure of the benthic community by gear fishing ghost.



Lobster trammel net is a common métier evaluated in all the areas where the study over the impact of artisanal fishery is carried out.

INTERVIEW WITH VICTOR GUTIERREZ, DIRECTOR OF ECOSAFIMED PROJECT

Biodiversity Foundation from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment in Spain



What is the aim of the ECOSAFIMED project? Who participates in this project?

ECOSAFIMED is the acronym for “Ecosystem conservation and sustainable artisanal fisheries in the Mediterranean basin”.

This project aims to contribute to increase the sustainability of artisanal fisheries in Spain, Italy and Tunisia, by developing their activity in a compatible way with the conservation of the best marine areas that we have in the Mediterranean Basin.

The project receives co-financing from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), in the frame of the Cross-border cooperation in the Mediterranean Basin 2007-2013 of European Union. It is coordinated in Spain by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment through their Biodiversity Foundation.

Project’s partner are the best scientific institutions of each involved country and participate as main actors of the marine research activities and collaborate with fishermen: the Institute of Marine Sciences (CSIC, Spain), the University of Genoa (Italy) and the National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies (INSTM for its acronym in French).

This project is one of the most important initiatives developed by Biodiversity Foundation as lead partner in the context of its work for biodiversity conservation and the promotion of sustainable and eco-friendly activities.

ECOSAFIMED is also supported by international institutions which provide recommendations on actions to be taken and assist in the monitoring of project activities. These are the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC / SPA for its acronym in English) of the Action Plan for the Mediterranean under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation of the International Union Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Network of marine protected area managers in the Mediterranean (MedPan), among others.

What is the objective of the actions included in the project?

The first thing we want to do is to identify those areas that have a high ecological value and that are important for the conservation of biodiversity and fishery resources in the Mediterranean. Then, we will determine which is the activity of artisanal fisheries in these areas and will assess their impact on the seabed and communities living there, by conducting oceanographic field surveys and onboard surveys to fishermen. Once we know the impact of artisanal fisheries, the next step will be to agree with the fishing fleets a set of measures to make their activity more responsible with the conservation of benthic communities and to promote their implementation. Finally, the project also aims to identify areas of high ecological value that could be proposed as Marine Protected Areas.

Regarding the work done until now, is there any map which includes these marine ecosystems?

Yes, this is the work we did in the workshop held in May in Genoa. The first phase of the project was the identification of these potential areas where the complex oceanographic studies are going to be done, in order to know what does exactly exist in the seabed. On the other hand, the *metiers*, which are the different modes of fishing in each area, have been identified, as they are different in Spain, Italy and Tunisia. This previous work of identification of different areas has been already done.

What are the next steps for the development of the project?

During this first year the work teams have been consolidated and the dissemination of the activities that will be developed throughout the project is being done.

Progress has been also made in the technical and scientific side, which lies in the accurate determination of the trawl free areas where artisanal fisheries operate. Also, the oceanographic field surveys and the onboard observations with fishermen have started, in order to have a second year focused on a bigger effort in data analysis and to elaborate recommendations.

All this has been done parallel to an important work in awareness raising and dissemination towards the population, because it is important that the biodiversity wealth of the Mediterranean is well known by everybody and that the work of the artisanal fisheries is valorized.

What have in common the artisanal fisheries of these three countries that have allowed advancing in this initiative of cross border cooperation?

What they have in common goes beyond the similarities between the fishing métiers or the target fish species. The relevant thing is the social roots that characterize the fishermen with their environment, and that is very similar in the three countries and in all the Mediterranean in general. It is important to have in mind that although the artisanal fisheries do not represent the major percentage in captures, it does in fleet and number of employments and this is also very common in all the Mediterranean. The artisanal fishermen are workers performing their activity in the territories where they are set and that create local employment, contributing to the maintenance of the social structure of many populations, through history and traditions around the world of fisheries and the sea that we think it is necessary to preserve. This component is highly valued by the Biodiversity Foundation and is the reason why the participation of fishermen is a key issue for ECOSAFIMED.



Fishermen in the Balearic Islands, Spain.

I think this is one of the main advantages of this ENPI CBC MED Programme of the EU, within the framework of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Policy. The objective of the Programme is to promote processes of sustainable cooperation at the level of Mediterranean Basin, dealing with common challenges and promoting its potentially. ECOSAFIMED is therefore, a cooperation project among the three countries participating, whose aim is to contribute to the socioeconomic, environmental and cultural development of the Mediterranean region. One of the main results expected of the projects is the transferring of the know-how and good practices among scientists, managers and fishermen of northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

4



Artisanal fisheries in Tunisia.

The fact of connecting the North of the Mediterranean Sea with the South seems interesting because several times the European Union proposes measures to progress on responsible fisheries (something very positive) but maybe it makes no sense in a relative small sea like this, to make progress in the North but not in the South.

What will be the final objective of the project?

The final objective is to valorize the activity of traditional fisheries. In case some impact over the seabed is being produced or that some techniques or practices could be improved, the project will offer assessment to fishermen about how to do it in a more efficient way, both for the development of their work and for nature conservation. In addition, recommendations about the kind of activity to be developed in areas of high ecological value will be suggested to the European Union, in order to maintain artisanal fisheries because of their high environmental and socioeconomic value.

ECOSAFIMED Events

Kick-off meeting in Barcelona (Spain)

The ECOSAFIMED project was launched in a kick off meeting held in Barcelona on February. Spain, Italy and Tunisia promote responsible fisheries in the Mediterranean basin by means of a cross border cooperation initiative co-financed by the European Union having a budget allocation of 1.9 mill €.

Seminar at the University of Genoa (Italy)

Spain, Italy and Tunisia have held a joint seminar at the University of Genoa as part of the ECOSAFIMED project in the ENPI Mediterranean Basin Programme, with progress made in exchanging scientific knowledge on artisanal fishing practices in trawl-free areas. The seminar took place in Genoa on April 30.

INSTM held the second Steering Committee meeting in Salambo (Carthage)

Spain, Italy and Tunisia convened on June 12 at the National Institute of Marine Science and Technology of Tunisia to hold the second Management Committee meeting for the ECOSAFIMED project of the ENPI

Mediterranean Basin European Programme, with progress made in preparing oceanographic surveys that will be conducted in areas without trawl fishing to assess the possible impacts of artisanal fishing practices on benthic communities where fishing normally takes place.

ECOSAFIMED Next Events

3rd Steering and Technical Committee. Genoa (Italy)

The next steering committee of the ECOSAFIMED project will be held in Genoa on 9th-10th December 2014. Partners from Spain, Italy and Tunisia will participate by showing the activities developed and results achieved in each country, and establishing the next steps to be undertaken.

NEXMED Conference, Rome (Italy)

From ENPI to ENI: a New Phase of Cross-Border Cooperation Achievements and New Challenges. The conference will be focused in the passage to the ENI (European Neighbourhood Instrument) CBC Med 2014-2020 Programme. Participants will have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the strategy, objectives and priorities of the new ENI CBC Med Programme. In addition, an exhibition will offer a journey through the 95 projects funded by the ENPI CBC Med 2007-2013 Programme. It will be held in Rome (Italy), December 12, 2014

<http://www.enpicbcmed.eu/communication/register-now-cross-border-cooperation-mediterranean-achievements-and-new-challenges-fo>

Follow the Project

Webpage: <http://ecosafimed.eu/>

Contact us: ecosafimed@fundacion-biodiversidad.es

The 2007-2013 ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation initiative funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The Programme objective is to promote the sustainable and harmonious cooperation process at the Mediterranean Basin level by dealing with the common challenges and enhancing its endogenous potential. It finances cooperation projects as a contribution to the economic, social, environmental and cultural development of the Mediterranean region. The following 14 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Syria (participation currently suspended), and Tunisia. The Joint Managing Authority (JMA) is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). Official Programme languages are Arabic, English and French (www.enpicbcmed.eu).

The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its border.

This newsletter has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Biodiversity Foundation and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union or of the Programme's management structures.