Ref.:228/2017 Rome, 12 September 2017

WORKING DOCUMENT ON A MULTIANNUAL PLAN FOR THE FISHERIES EXPLOITING DEMERSAL STOCKS IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA

According to the Common Fisheries Policy (Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013), the objective of sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources is more effectively achieved through a multiannual approach to fisheries management, and hence multiannual plans (MAP) reflecting the specificities of different fisheries shall be adopted as a priority.

MAPs should, where possible, cover multiple stocks where those stocks are jointly exploited. The MAPs should establish the framework for the sustainable exploitation of stocks and marine ecosystems concerned, defining clear time-frames and safeguard mechanisms for unforeseen developments.

The MAP for the Western Mediterranean is the first one in the region concerning demersal stocks. It should also be governed by clearly defined management objectives in order to contribute to the sustainable exploitation of marine resources and to the protection of the ecosystems. The MEDAC should play a key role in defining measures and provide advice after consultations of the fishing industry, scientists, NGOs, recreational fisheries and other stakeholders having interests in the area of application. Prior to including measures in a multiannual plan, account shall be taken of possible impacts of the plan under environmental, economic and social point of view.

1) Geographical scope of the plan

Although the majority of MEDAC's members agree that the geographical scope of the MAP should be wide and inclusive, it is a shared opinion (with the exception of OCEANA and Legambiente) that including all the GSAs in the same plan could lead to a difficult implementation of the measures at local level. A wider geographical scope should be set for the Western Mediterranean to set a general framework of implementation, however management measures should take into account the specificity of each homogeneous area in order to meet the targets of the plan.

2) Stocks and gears

All the MEDAC members agree with the stocks listed by STECF and reported here below, with some modifications. All commercially exploited demersal stocks should be considered, including target and bycatch species, together with the concerned fisheries and gears. Moreover, coastal demersal stocks should be included, as well as the impacts from Small Scale and Recreational fisheries.

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GSA	Species	A3 code	Main Gear	Fcurr/FMSY	Report
1	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, GTR, OTB	3.59	STECF15_18
	Aristeus antennatus	ARA	OTB	3.41	STECF 15_18
	Lophius budegassa	ANK	OTB	1.56	STECF 15_06
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB, GTR	4.85	STECF 15_06
	Parapenaeus longirostris	DPS	OTB	1.65	STECF 13_22
6	Aristeus antennatus	ARA	OTB	1.75	SAC 17
	Lophius budegassa	ANK	OTB	10.50	STECF 15_06

GSA	Species	A3 code	Main Gear	Fcurr/FMSY	Report
7	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB, OTT, LLS	3.59	STECF15_18
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB, LLS, GNS	3.21	STECF 14_17

GSA	Species	A3 code	Main Gear	Fcurr/Fmsy	Report
9	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB	5.50	STECF 15_18
	Aristomorpha foliacea	ARS	OTB	0.25	STECF 15_18
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	GNS, GTR, OTB	1.17	STECF 14_17
	Parapenaeus longirostris	DPS	OTB	0.97	STECF 15_06
10	Aristomorpha foliacea	ARS	OTB	1.40	STECF 15_18
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	GNS, GTR, OTB,	1	SAC 17
	Parapenaeus longirostris	DPS	OTB,	1.70	SAC 17
	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GNS, OTB		
11	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	OTB	5.50	STECF 15_18
	Aristomorpha foliacea	ARS	OTB	1.61	STECF 15_18
	Mullus barbatus	MUT	OTB	9.73	STECF 14_08

GNS: set gillnets OTB: bottom otter trawl GTR: trammel nets LLS: set longlines

3) Management options.

All the MEDAC members agree in including recreational fisheries in the MAP. As far as the management options are concerned, Federcoopesca and LegaCoop state that the reduction of 20% of fishing mortality should be considered instead of the fishing capacity. The majority of the members are not in favour of TAC and quotas for demersal species.

Legambiente, Oceana and WWF consider that fishing opportunities based on scientific advice should be adopted, including catch limits, when possible or effort limits (such as days/hour per day at sea per vessel or number of vessels i.e. quota effort) when multispecies fisheries occur. The allocation of fishing opportunities should take into account the impact on specific fishing areas, encouraging practices with the lowest impact on the stocks and ecosystems.

4) Other recommendations to reduce fishing mortality

All the MEDAC members listed a number of other recommendations:

- To implement new Marine protected Areas and Fishery Restricted Areas, with the involvement of all stakeholders; To establish spatio-temporal closures, in order to protect the spawning and nursery grounds. At this regard WWF suggests to take into account the outcomes of the project SafeNet – Sustainable Fisheries in EU Mediterranean waters through a network of MPAs on particular for coastal areas. The Report on the identification and characterization of nursery and spawning areas of selected stocks (Deliverable 2.3) aimed at identifying and describing the spatial-temporal distributions of the nursery and spawning grounds of the most relevant demersal stocks exploited by commercial fisheries in the GSAs 6,7,8,9,11 should be therefore taken into account. The aim of the project is to develop a spatial management model for the West Mediterranean to identify the best layout for spatial closures. The outcomes of the project should be available at the beginning of 2018.
- To improve the selectivity of the fishing gears; At this regard WWF suggests to take into account the outcomes of the project MINOUW aiming at encouraging the adoption of fishing technologies and practices to reduce unwanted catches and contribute to the elimination of discards in EU fisheries.
- To improve the diversification of fishing activities (ittiturismo, pescaturismo…);
- To consider special provisions for Small Scale Fisheries.
- To adjust the Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) to the size at maturity and increase the number of species for which MCRS is set.

5) Other management recommendations

- To carry out a socio-economic analysis before the implementation of technical/management measures, in order to ensure stability of the fishing sector.