



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



General Fisheries  
Commission for  
the Mediterranean  

---

MedSea4Fish

Research programme on recreational fisheries

# Research Programme Update

Fabio Grati  
(Research Programme Coordinator)

MEDAC WG4 meeting

25 February 2025

Rome



# Background



- Establishment of a permanent working group on small-scale and recreational fisheries
- Assessment of the impacts of recreational fisheries

GFCM mid-term strategy

2017

Questionnaire on MRF

- Characteristics of national MRF (definition, modalities, species, gears, etc.)
- Ongoing surveys and data collection, National legislation, Existing studies
- MRF organizations

2017

1st GFCM WG on SSF and RF

- Collect additional available information on MRF to complement questionnaires
- Carry out technical, scientific and socio-economic research on GFCM priority species targeted by MRF

2019-2022

Pilot studies (Med & BS)

Italy (GSA17), Türkiye (Black Sea), Tunisia, Lebanon

Handbook for MRF data collection

2021

2021

2nd GFCM WG on MRF

Finalize the ongoing pilot studies

2022

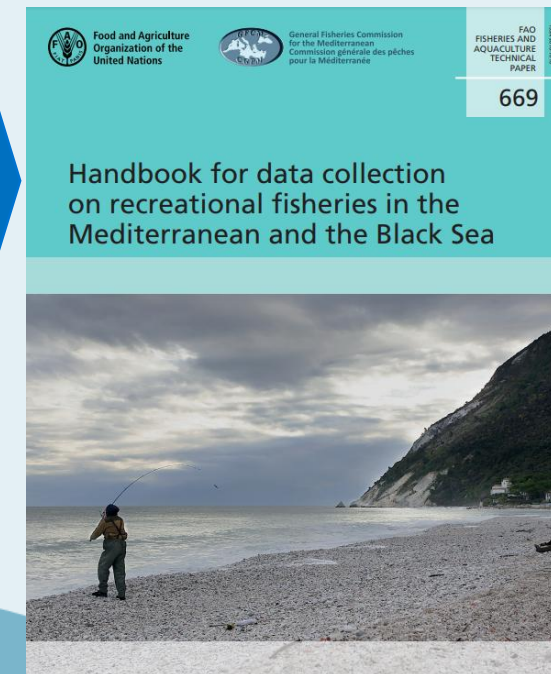
3rd GFCM WG on MRF

Supported the development of a dedicated Research Programme for MRF  
Workplan: develop a concept note towards a regional research programme for RF in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

2022

Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/12 on the establishment of a set of minimum rules for sustainable recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea)

The GFCM Secretariat shall launch a Research Programme on MRF activities in 2024



# Objectives

The Research Programme aims to enhance knowledge of the impact of recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, supporting sustainable fisheries management

## Four specific goals:

1. Initiate or improve data collection
2. Integrate collected data into stock assessments
3. Evaluate and improve existing management measures
4. Foster engagement with key stakeholders

The programme is planned for a duration of **three years (2024-2026)**

# Work Packages

Transversal action: **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

Work Package 1:  
**DATA COLLECTION**

Work Package 2:  
**FRAMEWORK FOR STOCK  
ASSESSMENT**

Work Package 3:  
**MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

Work Package 4: **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

# Work Package 1 – Data collection

**Objective:** collect data on catches (retained + released), fishing effort and socio-economic variables following the harmonized methodology described in the GFCM handbook (Grati et al., 2021)

## Method:

- Phase 1: Identification of the target population and a probabilistic panel
- Phase 2a: Recall survey on a probabilistic panel of fishers
- Phase 2b: Onsite survey
- Data submission and storage in 123 Survey

## Deliverables:

- Number of fishers per country, fishing effort, number and weight of retained and released species, expenditures, recreational value of different fishing spots (travel cost)
- Advice on potential future needs for data submission requirements (DCRF)

# Work Package 2 – Framework for stock assessment

Work Package 2:  
FRAMEWORK FOR STOCK  
ASSESSMENT

## General remarks:

- Data collected in WP1 will provide insights into the key species targeted by recreational fisheries and help assess the necessity of evaluating their stocks status
- This may involve **integrating these data into existing stock assessments** or **initiating additional assessments** specifically for key recreational fishing stocks
- These assessments could be conducted independently or **complemented by data from small-scale fisheries** (i.e., priority species for recreational fishing often overlap with those targeted by SSF), which are not yet used in stock assessments

# Work Package 2 – Framework for stock assessment

Work Package 2:  
FRAMEWORK FOR STOCK  
ASSESSMENT

## Types of data needed:

- **Possibly long time-series (reconstruction strategies)**
- **Length-frequency distributions (LFDs) and/or catch-at-age**
- In length-based models (e.g. LBSPR, etc.) MRF data needs: LFDs, catches and life-history characteristics (by selecting 5-6 key species)

...try some simulations by selecting 1-2 key species with:

- In data-rich models (e.g. SS3, a4a, etc.) MRF data needs: time-series of LFDs, catches and selectivity
- In data-poor models (e.g. SPiCT, CMSY, etc.) MRF data needs: time-series of catches



# Work Package 2 – Framework for stock assessment

Work Package 2:  
FRAMEWORK FOR STOCK  
ASSESSMENT

## Deliverables:

- Stock assessment using data-limit models for 5-6 species
- For data-moderate models, catch and LFDs reconstruction for selected recreational fisheries' key species
- Use the above data to run data-moderate stock assessment (e.g. SS3, SPiCT, etc.) for 1-2 key species to explore the impact of these data in the resource
- Strategic framework/roadmap for stock assessment of recreational fisheries priority species, including first trial of data-poor stock assessment on selected priority stocks
- Concept note for a study on post-release mortality rates, including guidance on best practices for handling vulnerable species



# Work Package 3 – Management measures

Work Package 3:  
**MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

- CPCs employ a wide range of management measures for MRF, which should account for the specific characteristics and diversity of recreational fishing techniques used across different countries
- This WP aims to document existing measures in place in CPCs and provide scientific advice on their effectiveness, considering environmental, cultural and socio-economic factors

Experts in the research programme will collaborate to compile information on existing MRF management measures and assess their effectiveness. Through a dedicated forum involving experts and stakeholders, recommendations will be developed to enhance management measures, focusing on:

- a) Sustainable marine resource exploitation
- b) Balanced regulations adapting recreational fisheries to changing opportunities
- c) Non-discriminatory strategies to mitigate conflicts with other sea uses (e.g., SSF)
- d) Strengthening controls against illegal fishing

**Deliverable:** Toolbox of MRF management measures compiled (technical elements for management), providing expert guidance on existing measures in the region and the effectiveness of said measures

# Work Package 4 – Stakeholder engagement

## Work Package 4: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- The identification and engagement of stakeholders plays a pivotal role in programming and implementing technical and management measures for a sustainable MRF
- This transversal WP aims to boost a multidisciplinary and multi-actors dialogue between recreational fishers, researchers and decision-makers at the national and international level.

The WP is expected to engage under a common and shared participatory approach agreed since the project start, contributing to:

- a) Coordination and facilitation of relationships towards the common goals set by the project
- b) Bridging the gap between research and practice
- c) Identifying stakeholder capacity building needs
- d) Engaging fishers in data collection activities and management discussions

### **Deliverables:**

- Mapping of MRF stakeholders (e.g., MRF organizations) in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region
- Dedicated stakeholder consultations at key stages of the research programme

# Kick-off Meeting

**19-20 February Rome (FAO Headquarters - hybrid)**

About 55 participants from 14 Countries, DG MARE and MEDAC

## **Country presentations:**

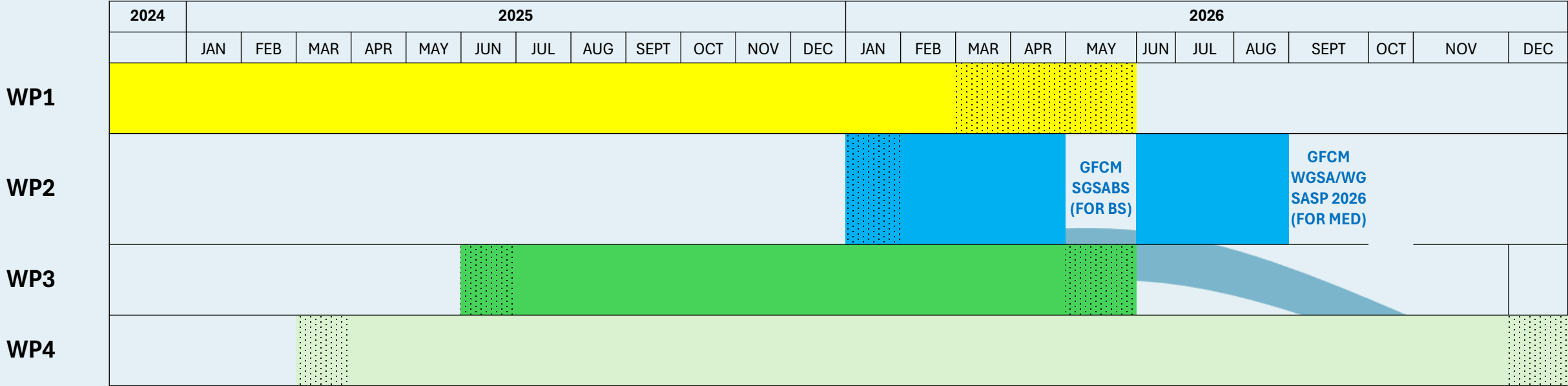
Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Romania, Spain, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine

- General information on MRF
- Legislation
- Involvement in WP1

# Kick-off Meeting

19-20 February Rome (FAO Headquarters - hybrid)

## Chronogram



Thank you for  
your attention

Any questions?

Fabio Grati  
Research Programme Coordinator

