



# HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON SMALL SCALE FISHERIES

MALTA 25-26.09.2018

WWF Mediterranean Marine Initiative



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## WWF BRIEFING

# THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

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The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM-FAO) is organizing a “[High-level Conference on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea](#)” that will take place in Malta on 25-26 September 2018. WWF is key partner to the GFCM for this event which is also supported by the European Commission and hosted by the Maltese Government.

The event represents the magnitude of work that WWF carried out in the last 10 years, seeking to elicit political will and concrete action to empower small-scale fisheries and laid the foundation to develop sustainable small scale fisheries (SSF) in the regions.

It will result in the official adoption of the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RPOA-SSF), which is the result of the culmination of work carried out by WWF, GFCM, the European Commission, some political decision-makers of the Mediterranean coastal countries, consultative fora such as MEDAC, as well as some progressive fishers, who, unlike others, have decided to commit themselves to ecological, economic and social sustainability.

The RPOA-SSF is a solid political commitment, which sets the path to the implementation of concrete actions to be carried out over the next ten years (until 2028) to strengthen and support sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

The conference will consist of a day (Sept 25th) dedicated to stakeholder discussions to highlight best practices in the region followed by a high-level event (Sept 26th) with ministers and the European Commission to formally adopt the RPOA-SSF and sign the “Friends of Small Scale Fisheries” Charter.

On September 25th, WWF will moderate a panel discussion on SSF co-management and then will detail to stakeholders the aims of the “Friends of Small Scale Fisheries” Platform and the Charter.

On September 26th, WWF will be part of a selected delegation that will attend the high level event when the Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries ministers will adopt the the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RPOA-SSF). WWF and GFCM-FAO will also master the official signature of the charter of the “Friends of SSF”.

WWF will be present with a delegation of 12 people and 17 invitees including fishers and other stakeholders (development cooperation agencies, fishers and fishermen guilds) that are collaborating with WWF at project pilot sites. They will be from Spain, France, Turkey, Greece, Algeria, Tunisia and Croatia.

More information: <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/meetings/ssf2018/en>  
and [http://wwf.panda.org/small scale fisheries conference eng/](http://wwf.panda.org/small_scale_fisheries_conference_eng/)

# THE REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE SSF SECTOR

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The Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RPOA-SSF) envisages the development and implementation of actions aimed at improving nine key areas connected with small scale fisheries management: scientific research, collection of small-scale fisheries data, definition of appropriate small-scale fisheries management measures, analysis of small-scale fisheries value chain, participation of small-scale fishers in decision-making processes, capacity-building, guarantee of decent work, role of women, evaluation of climate impact on environment and consequently on fishery.

The RPOA-SSF is the policy document that the Mediterranean and Black Sea RFMO (i.e. GFCM-FAO) dedicates to a specific field such as SSF fishing, and importantly it makes official - for the first time ever - co-management as the best tool to promote participation among fishers, sense of responsibility, respect for rules, reduction of impacts on stocks and the environment. The inclusion of co-management in this document was one of the key requests that WWF have made to GFCM, the European Commission and all

policy makers in the region. The formalisation of the importance of co-management is an undeniable result of WWF's work in the region.

The conference will result in the official adoption of the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RPOA-SSF). Moreover, WWF and other key stakeholders including [GFCM-FAO](#), [LIFE](#), [CIHEAM](#), [MEDAC](#) and [BISAC](#) will sign a Charter “Friends of Small Scale Fishery” formalizing the establishment of a platform of the main actors working on SSF in the regions. The aim is to support the implementation of the RPOA-SSF by identifying priorities, catalyzing collaboration among SSF actors, and promoting a better use of funds to improve SSF management in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

## SMALL SCALE FISHERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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Since ancient times, small-scale fisheries (SSF) have played an important socio-economic and cultural role in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Their activities, involving small vessels with limited amounts of daily catches, represent 84 percent of the Mediterranean and Black Sea fishing fleet, 62 percent of the total workforce onboard fishing vessels and 24 percent of total landed value.

SSF employ over 147 thousand fishers and it is estimated that they generate jobs for another 150 thousand people in the Mediterranean.

Many small-scale fishers are self-employed and engaged both in directly providing food for their household and in commercial fishing, processing and marketing. SSF are a multi-dimensional sector, where modern developments and cultural heritage coexist and are embedded in the surrounding environment. They are important vectors of local knowledge and good practices and they have a relatively low environmental impact.

Women play a vital, though often hidden, unrecognised, and unrewarded role in the sector, including maintaining the household, especially its economy and food security, adding value to the catch along the value chain, and providing on-shore support to at sea activities.

Despite their immense economic, cultural and natural values, the Mediterranean and the Black Seas are two highly threatened and degraded marine areas, with more than 80 percent of assessed fish stocks being overfished. As such, small-scale fishers and their families struggle to survive, as their livelihood depends on dwindling catches and income.

The fragmentation of the sector and the diversity of the region’s cultural and economic context are such that SSF remains a sector characterized by insufficient information, inadequate governance, limited stakeholder representation in decision-making processes and limited financial investment in comparison to the big industrial fishers. As a result they are often disempowered and ‘voiceless’ which contributes further to mis-management and continued failure for opportunities to participate in the taking of decisions that directly affect their livelihoods. All of these issues are putting the future of the whole sector at risk.

Further efforts and new solutions are necessary to secure a sustainable future for Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and ensure healthy fish stocks and ecosystems.

This is why the RPOA-SSF plan will play a key role in reversing the negative trend of recent decades putting in place the needed conditions to empower a category of fishers that has never been properly managed. Increasing the role and responsibility of SSF in the Fisheries management will reduce their impact on fish stocks and coastal biodiversity while improving the livelihood of coastal fishers in the region.

# WWF'S ENGAGEMENT ON SSF IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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## **WWF's vision: Designing a new way of sustainably managing Mediterranean fish resources**

WWF believes and has demonstrated that bringing fishers into the decision making processes (through co-management) is crucial to ensure the development of sustainable fishing practices that allow fish stock recovery, protect the marine ecosystems and secure livelihoods for local communities in the Mediterranean. However to date there are still too few cases where this approach is implemented.

Traditional and self-management of fisheries is a practice that has existed since ancient times. However, co-management is an approach more recently proposed in response to the failure of the current centralised management to effectively rebuild fish stocks, and to a lack of government resources to manage fisheries resources effectively.

Bringing together fishers, government officials and others operating within the fisheries sector, co-management systems and processes vary in terms of the nature of power sharing, composition and functions. There is no blueprint for co-management and no standardized approaches, but rather it represents a range of arrangements, levels of sharing of responsibility and power, and way of integration of local management mechanisms and more formalized government systems.

WWF recognises that while it cannot solve all marine resource management problems, co-management offers a process within which the most innovative solutions are more likely to emerge. The co-management approach offers a way to overcome many of the failings of conventional resource management. For example, increased participation offers people the right to a say in decisions that may deeply affect their lives and livelihoods; provides a tool for empowerment; a method to reinforce self-esteem; and increases the legitimacy, transparency and accountability of resource management.

For small-scale fisheries in particular, co-management is a beneficial strategy, as the standard centralised fisheries management approaches which tend to focus on industrialised fisheries, managing single stocks whose abundance can be determined, and where the number of fishers and landing ports is small enough to monitor catches, cannot be applied to the small scale sector. In general small-scale fishers are targeting multiple species, whose stocks and growth rates can vary greatly from place to place, usually there is a lack of information regarding the number of small-scale fishers per country and governments often have insufficient resources to enforce regulations on a national scale.

For these reasons, small-scale fisheries regulations and management, needs to be very locally adapted and requires buy-in from the fishers to improve compliance and reduce the enforcement requirements. It must be acknowledged that such a system can be demanding in terms of time and resources and can take a decade or more to become established. Despite these costs, co-management is really the best option to support small-scale fisheries as it allows management measures to be tailored to suit each unique context. Finally, ensuring fishers' support for the measures they have co-designed increases the likelihood that these are correctly implemented.

## **WWF's work to transform small scale fisheries in the Mediterranean**

WWF is committed to a 5 year program focused on SSF in partnership with the GFCM-FAO, and other organisations. The aim is to work with small scale fishers across the Mediterranean to increase capacity, develop co-management schemes leading to sustainable fisheries management and improved livelihoods. WWF is concentrating efforts in selected SSF sites (21 in total) in Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Tunisia and Algeria. All together, these nine countries represent more than 60% of the small scale fisheries sector in the Mediterranean.

WWF action also entails a regional level of engagement with fishers, authorities, and other stakeholders. This program is the largest, single initiative focused on the sustainability of SSF, bringing together a diverse range of partners across the Mediterranean region.

## REGIONAL PLATFORM: FRIENDS OF SSF

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During the High-Level Conference, WWF, [GFCM-FAO](#), [LIFE](#), [CIHEAM](#), [MEDAC](#) and [BISAC](#) will sign a Charter “Friends of Small Scale Fisheries” formalizing the establishment of a platform of the main actors working on SSF in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. This platform has been designed, built and is coordinated by WWF and GFCM-FAO.

The Platform (members) commit to:

- increase the knowledge on SSF and support the gathering of data at the local, national and Mediterranean and Black Sea levels;
- develop initiatives (e.g. projects) to better define, share and implement sustainable environmental and socio-economic solutions, identified by members, researchers, decision makers and by SSF actors and their organizations;
- support and improve the application of strategies, recommendations, resolutions, declarations, action plans and proposals published by the GFCM-FAO;
- share project and field activity (e.g. case studies) results with the other members in order to keep updated the mapping and visual WEB representation of all ongoing initiatives on SSF, with a view to sharing good practices throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea;
- develop shared concepts and proposals that may be useful for the scientific and socio-economic debate currently in progress (e.g. data collection or knowledge sharing);
- assure that the best SSF knowledge reaches decision makers, GFCM working groups and statutory bodies to be considered in the formulation of advice on SSF.

All activities of the Platform will support the implementation of the FAO [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication](#) (also known as the SSF Guidelines), as well as the implementation of the [Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea \(RPOA-SSF\)](#), the [Mid-term strategy \(2017-2020\) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries](#) adopted by GFCM-FAO, the [Malta MedFish4Ever Declaration](#) and the [Sofia Ministerial Declaration](#) launched by the EU Commission.

The platform will immediately identify priorities among actions listed in the RPOA-SSF (e.g. scientific research; SSF data; management measures; value chain, participation in decision-making processes, capacity building, work conditions, role of women, climate and environment) to help shape the discussions about the implementation of the RPOA-SSF during the next 42<sup>nd</sup> GFCM Commission (October 2018), when binding resolutions and recommendations will be adopted by Mediterranean and Black Sea countries to govern SSF management towards environmental and social sustainability in the region.

## WWF'S ACTION AT THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

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The aim of the WWF participation at the High-Level Conference is to underline once again the importance of co-management and participatory processes to deliver conservation results and scale-up solutions at regional scale.

On September 25th WWF will moderate a panel entirely focused on co-management. Panelists will demonstrate that some co-managements are already in place in the Mediterranean and are promoting improvements in fisheries management and in the quality of life of fishermen.

Again on the 25th of September, together with GFCM, WWF will present the participatory work that led to the design and formalization of the platform “Friends of Small Scale Fishery”, whose founding members are WWF, [GFCM-FAO](#), [LIFE](#), [CIHEAM](#), [MEDAC](#) and [BISAC](#). WWF will also present the ongoing work of the platform, the matrix to characterize SSF, and a mapping web tool to understand where the efforts of the Platform members are devoted to improve SSF, where there are needs to put extra efforts, where actions were never implemented.

On the 26th of September, the conference will result in the official adoption of the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RPOA-SSF). Beside, the platform “Friends of Small Scale Fishery” will be formally signed in an event mastered by WWF and GFCM.

WWF is responsible for a panel and will participate in two sessions:

- (1) 25th of September: 14:30 – 15:30 Panel 1 - Promoting co-management to achieve small-scale fisheries (by WWF). The panel includes:
  - Sergi Tudela (Fishery DG) - *co-managements in Catalonia and co-management decree*;
  - Federico Gelmi, fisherman from Pantelleria - *self-regulation, the limitation to the fishing effort decided among the fishermen*;
  - Toni Grau, Fishery DG from the Balearic Islands - *co-management of the Jonquillo fishery*;
  - Vahdet ÜNAL, scientist from Turkey - *the management of Gokova bay*;
  - Luca Santarossa or Mosor (Fish MPABlue) with fisherman from Telascica - *co-management in the MPA of Telascica*;
  - BAHA Hamou, representative from Chambre Peche of Jijel and fishermen - *co-management in Jijel*.

\*\*The panel will be connected with national local debates with fishermen in Turkey, Croatia, Greece, Tunisia and Algeria.

2) 25th of September: 16:30 – 17:00 Presentation of the “Friends of SSF” regional coordination platform (by GFCM and WWF)

3) 26th of September: 10:30 – 11:00 Official launch of the “Friends of SSF” Platform

## WWF’S DELEGATION

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Name	Affiliation	Office-country
Demetres Karavellas (Head of Delegation)	WWF	Greece
Giuseppe Di Carlo	WWF	MMI
Marco Costantini	WWF	MMI
Claudia Scianna	WWF	Italy
Kate Hogg	WWF	MMI

Mouna Abaab	WWF	Tunisia
Yaprak Arda	WWF	Turkey
Mosor Prvan	WWF	Croatia
Raul Garcia	WWF	Spain
Antigoni Foutsi	WWF	Greece
Catherine Piante	WWF	France
Nino Accetta	Fishers association delegate	Italy
Angelo La Marca	Fisher	Italy
Federico Gemli	Fishers association delegate	Italy
Can Görgün	Fisher	Turkey
Ceyhan Çetin	Fisher	Turkey
Vahdet Unal	Consultant	Turkey
Ivica Lesic	Fisher	Croatia
Helena Lesic	Fisher	Croatia
Sebastijan Raljević	Fisher	Croatia
Kristijan Zovic	Fisher	Croatia
Ioannis Zotalis	Fisher	Greece
Chistos Iliou	Fisher	Greece
Mr Sassi Alaya (Tunisia)	Fisher	Tunisia
Mr BAHA Hamou (Algeria)	Fisher	Algeria

## REFERENCES

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- [High Level Conference webpage](#)
- WWF's dedicated web-pages for livestream in 3 languages:
  - [http://wwf.panda.org/small\\_scale\\_fisheries\\_conference\\_eng/](http://wwf.panda.org/small_scale_fisheries_conference_eng/)
  - [http://wwf.panda.org/small\\_scale\\_fisheries\\_conference\\_spa/](http://wwf.panda.org/small_scale_fisheries_conference_spa/)
  - [http://wwf.panda.org/small\\_scale\\_fisheries\\_conference\\_fr/](http://wwf.panda.org/small_scale_fisheries_conference_fr/)
- [Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea \(RPOA-SSF\)](#)
- WWF's full Project Proposal "Transforming Mediterranean Small-Scale Fisheries" (Sept 2017-Sept 2022) is available upon request.

## CONTACTS

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