



## Promoting co-management as an innovative tool for the sustainable use of marine natural resources

**Monday 10 December, Sheikh Zayed Centre, 15:00 – 17:30**

### WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The workshop “Promoting co-management as an innovative tool for the sustainable use of marine natural resources” was prepared by the PANACeA project as a side event within the FAO GFCM Fish Forum, and was intended to promote co-management as an efficient and promising innovative tool for the sustainable development and use of marine natural resources in the Mediterranean region.

The event showcased experiences of co-management best practices from several Interreg Med co-financed projects (FishMAPBlue2, CONFISH, PHAROS4MPAs) of the Biodiversity Protection Community, as well as research results and recommendations from other relevant initiatives, such as DESTIMED, and different actors involved in the co-management approach, such as universities (University of Nice and University of Zagreb), research institutes (ISPRA), networks (FARNET) and NGOs (WWF), regional authorities (Government of the Balearic islands) and MPA managing bodies (Torre Guaceto marine protected area).

Roundtable 1 focused on **why and to what extent co-management is a key tool and an opportunity for the sustainable development of Mediterranean small-scale fisheries**. Panellists provided insights on the definition of co-management as a mechanism for balancing powers and responsibilities among local stakeholders, namely artisanal fishermen and MPA managing bodies.

The discussions revealed that the degree of participation in a co-management process is a key factor to build trust between artisanal fishermen and MPA managers. Some experiences show successful co-management practices where artisanal fishermen take responsibility for the sound management of protected areas and accept to enlarge part of the Natura 2000 area outside MPAs and decrease their fishing efforts. This process is naturally linked to re-compensation instruments, such as in the case of FISHMPABlue2, which is testing this tool in 11 protected areas. The pillars of an effective co-management model are closely linked with

engagement, trust-building, and the availability of adequate tools throughout the process between MPA managing bodies and fishermen. Through concrete cooperation, such as monitoring or patrolling, fishermen can take ownership of and responsibility for the sustainable use of natural resources within a designated area. Research needs to provide information for quick and adapted decision-making, rather than data. That way, MPAs can play the role of laboratories to test and fine tune tools and practices that work best for nature protection and management and are adapted to local communities. Moreover, co-management models oriented to small-scale fisheries also have to take into consideration recreational fishing, which places strong pressure on MPAs. Specific rights given to local artisanal fishermen versus recreational ones can ease the process and favour the local and small-scale fisheries. As a last ingredient, the representativity and leadership of local fishermen is also an important aspect to consider in the development of co-management models.

Roundtable 2 focused on the **multi-stakeholder involvement and participatory approach** and on how to move from theory to practice and how to create ownership and raise awareness for integrated MPA management.

It was clearly expressed and agreed by the speakers that building trust and being completely transparent and clearly sharing agendas around the table are key. CONFISH results proved that involving social scientists, finding the right language and translating scientific and technical languages into a comprehensive and pedagogical one is a pre-requisite for the success of the co-management model.

A good and neutral facilitator is also clearly needed and can support the achievement of a successful co-management model. Other means are essential, such as the establishment of a good code of conduct.

There is also the need to find win-win scenarios. This is a key point to bring together around the table the different stakeholders to solve and overcome a common challenge.

Moreover, the issue of scale cannot be ignored. The problem is not only bridging knowledge but also the scales – using ecosystem-based approaches in co-management favours the use of ecological scales rather than administrative ones.

Concerning the replicability aspects, replication is not always directly possible and is heavily linked, especially in the Mediterranean, around local cultural and socio-economic models. Involving multi-stakeholders in co-management models is not a simple “cut & paste” recipe, instead requiring local adaptations.

Roundtable 3 focused on **how to expand and transfer best practices in order to reach a common integration of co-management in the Mediterranean region**.

Engaging stakeholders is within the agenda of the FAO - GFCM and its management plan, as is also considered in specific activities, such as capacity building and summer universities.

In terms of financial mechanisms, there need to be more possibilities for funding small initiatives. This will trigger engagement by not focusing solely on big projects.

Networking is also a key aspect to ease transferability. The Med Biodiversity Protection Community, in the framework of PANACeA, and other types of networks such as FLAGs are needed. They convey many good practices to raise consumer awareness and promote local and sustainable fishing.

Sustainable socio-economic issues need to be strengthened in order to use natural resources sustainably. Training and bringing to the table socio-economists to fisheries activities is very important.

In some cases, top-down approaches for co-management could be a bottleneck, and bottom-up approaches can provide a way forward. However, changing habits is difficult and progress needs to be made regarding systemic resistance. In every stakeholder layer, co-management efficiency has to be promoted as a mixed approach that allows switching from a one-way top-down approach to a multilevel governance model by implementing a cross-cutting approach between top-down and bottom-up approaches. Complementary systems, rather than a single system, have been shown to work better.

Flexibility, considering readjustments based on local experiences and following a feedback loop are also keys to successful co-management plans.

Finally, having a common perspective in which many countries share the main space is an important framing for the vision we have.