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Meeting of the Management Committee for the ENPI-ECOSAFIMED European project

Press Release

## **Spain, Italy and Tunisia prepare oceanographic surveys to study the sea beds in artisanal fishing areas in the Mediterranean**

- **The Marine Science Institute of Spain's Scientific Research Council, the National Institute of Marine Science and Technology of Tunisia and the University of Genoa will begin their studies in July and August.**
- **The ECOSAFIMED project of the ENPI CBC MED programme, co-ordinated by the Biodiversity Foundation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment, promotes responsible practices in artisanal fisheries and the conservation of benthic ecosystems in the Mediterranean Basin.**

**12 June 2014.-** Spain, Italy and Tunisia convened 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 with low pressure from trawl fishing to assess the possible impacts of artisanal fishing practices on benthic communities where fishing normally takes place.

The Biodiversity Foundation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment is co-ordinating this cross-border initiative, with involvement from the Institute of Marine Science of the Scientific Research Council (ICM-CSIC), the Tunisian National Institute of Marine Science and Technology, and the University of Genoa.

Since 10 June, the participating partners have been analysing the progress of the ECOSAFIMED project, "Towards Ecosystem Conservation and Sustainable Artisanal Fisheries in the Mediterranean Basin", which forms part of the ENPI Mediterranean Basin Programme, and is aimed at generating scientific recommendations to ensure the sustainability of artisanal fishing practices in the Mediterranean Sea.

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During the meeting, the parties assessed the steps taken since the project got under way in January 2014, as well as drawing up plans for the actions scheduled for the coming months. These include the oceanographic surveys to be conducted by the partners in July and August.

In the case of Spain, the study areas are in the Balearic Islands and Catalonia; in Italy, they are in Lazio and Sicily; and in Tunisia, the areas of La Galite and the Esquerquis Bank near Nabeul, Ariana and Jendouba will be studied. These oceanographic surveys will use an underwater robot (remote-operated vehicle) to study the sea bed.

The artisanal fisheries present in each area of study will also be assessed. For each area, a particular *métier* has been defined, i.e. the combination of using a particular fishing method to catch a species in a particular area.

During the meeting, the road map was also drawn up for the forthcoming seminars and meetings with sectors involved in the project, which include artisanal fishing associations and local communities.

The actions taken so far in this first quarter were also reviewed. Among other actions, this initial stage studied the use of marine stewardship as a conservation strategy to promote involvement from civil society, the fishing sector and the authorities in the planning, management and conservation of marine ecosystems in the Mediterranean Basin.

The Manage Committee meeting held in Tunisia was attended by representatives from the Directorate-General of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Ministry of Agriculture of Tunisia, the Tunisian Association for the Development of Artisanal Fisheries and the Tunisian Union for Agriculture and Fisheries, an organisation that is supporting and collaborating on the project.

### **ECOSAFIMED AND THE ENPI CBC MED PROGRAMME**

With a budget of €1.9 million, the ECOSAFIMED project promotes responsible fishing practices and communication between researchers and the artisanal fishing sector, with the aim of helping to conserve marine ecosystems. The ultimate objective of the project is to produce a series of recommendations for managing the artisanal fisheries studied in the Mediterranean, to ensure their compatibility with good conservation practices for marine habitats.

The project also seeks to identify valuable areas to be proposed as Protected Marine



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Areas under the auspices of European directives and/or the Barcelona Convention. ECOSAFIMED is one of the 39 projects to have received funding from the 1,095 projects presented at the second call for the 2007-2013 ENPI CBC MED Programme.

The ENPI Mediterranean Sea Programme is a cross-border co-operation initiative that forms part of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The programme's aim is to promote co-operation between regions on both shores of the Mediterranean, in order to tackle common challenges and assess endogenous potentials.

A total of 14 countries, representing 76 regions and close to 110 million inhabitants, have benefited from the programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, the Palestinian Authority, Portugal, Spain, Syria and Tunisia.

The programme has a budget of €200 million, funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, and the contribution to each project amounts to a maximum of 90 per cent of the total cost.

The projects funded deal with a range of issues relating to promoting socioeconomic and territorial development: supporting innovation and research; sustainable development and energy efficiency throughout the Mediterranean Sea Basin; improving conditions and the various forms of movement of persons, goods and capital; and promoting dialogue between cultures and forms of governance.

Information on the ECOSAFIMED project and the ENPI CBC MED Programme is available on the [ENPI CBC MED](#) and the [EuropeAid Office of Development and Cooperation](#) websites.

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