

A scientific network in support of the application of EAF in the Mediterranean and Black Seas

“EMBASEAS NETWORK”

APRIL 2014

CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Background

As a result of the development of the “Coordinating research in support to application of EAF (Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries) and management advice in the Mediterranean and Black Seas”, acronym: CREAM, Call: FP7-KBBE-2010-4 KBBE.2010.1.4-08: Improving research in support to scientific advice to fisheries management in the Mediterranean and Black Seas Mandatory ICPC (Mediterranean Partner Countries and Black Sea countries), May, 2011 – April 2014 Duration: 3 years, the partnership of the CREAM Coordination Research has produced this document.

The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) is, according to the FAO, an approach to fisheries management and development that strives to balance diverse societal objectives, by taking into account the knowledge and uncertainties about biotic, abiotic and human components of ecosystems and their interactions and applying an integrated approach to fisheries within ecologically meaningful boundaries. The purpose of EAF is to plan, develop and manage fisheries in a manner that addresses the multiple needs and desires of societies, without jeopardizing the options for future generations to benefit from the full range of goods and services provided by marine.

One of the main conclusion of the WP6 of the CREAM project was that a visionary and coordinated scientific network to promote operational EAF initiatives, created by the scientific community following a bottom-up approach in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, is needed. The proposed scientific network, named EMBASEAS (the network aiming at being an ambassador to promote EAF in the Mediterranean and Black Seas), should add value to the current situation (Coll et al 2013¹).

The network should be independent and individually based, but with clear links to regional bodies such as GFCM, FAO, BSC, the EU Joint Research Centre, and other regional and intergovernmental institutions, as well as with non-governmental organizations promoting EAF. Key players of the network should be those interested scientists of different disciplines, participating as independent individuals, rather than as national or institutional representatives. The network should have strong links with local and regional organizations involved in EAF initiatives, and seek the involvement of other stakeholders such as professional and recreational fishers, other users of the marine environment, naturalists, local experts, and policy makers.

¹ Coll, M., Cury, P., Azzurro, E., Bariche, M., Bayadas, G., Bellido, J.M., Chaboud, C., Claudet, J., El-Sayed, A., Gascuel, D., Knittweis, L., Pipitone, C., Samuel-Rhoads, Y., Taleb, S., Tudela, S., Valls, A., Participants, W., 2013. The scientific strategy needed to promote a regional ecosystem-based approach to fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. *Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries* 23, 415-434.

The discussion of the group was also on how to build such a network with the consolidation of a regional scientific vision, with a clear scientific strategy, and plan (including a diversified toolbox), to promote the rendering the scientific aspect of EAF in the region operational. Such a network should have the capability to define a clear, strong, and shared vision for EAF in the region. This could be achieved by gaining a broader view on the EAF implementation strategy, in particular by keeping track of what needs to be pursued to ultimately ensure a good status of the Mediterranean and Black Sea ecosystems. The network should communicate experience obtained in implementing EAF, identify key objectives and topics, and establish a road map of coordinated actions to accomplish them. The scientific network should also aim to promote the coordination of scientific activities, to date local or fragmented, in an efficient way, using local initiatives but contributing to the regional vision. This would bridge different geographical scales and promote the exchange of experiences and the use of innovative tools such as models, indicators, scenarios, and other integrative tools. The methodology and manner of linking the initiatives from the local to the regional level can be a considerable challenge for the network.

In the short term, the network could start as a networking activity of scientists and stakeholders to promote the EAF approach by exchanging information, coordinating activities, and improving the capacity of developing science for EAF in the region. The network should promote concrete scientific actions considering available data, tools, and initiatives at different geographic scales to improve process-based ecological knowledge in the area. The group identified several novel topics and initiatives with added value to the network (e.g., the ecology and impact of Non-indigenous species NIS, cumulative impacts, the impacts of specific fishing gear, building scenarios, ...). One of the first tasks of a coordinated scientific initiative would be to identify, document, and promote successful case studies in the region. This could help establish bridges between scientists, policy makers, and other users of the sea, in a transversal way dealing with the best territorial management unit. Other potential immediate activities include the documentation of initiatives, the sharing of already available information and scientific capabilities, the improvement of the training capabilities, and the capacity building of the scientific community and stakeholders, and the establishment of mechanisms to disseminate knowledge to end users.

In the medium-long term, the network should aim at providing scientific advice in support of the implementation of an EAF (from the local to the regional level), and informing on the adaptive management in the whole Mediterranean and Black Sea, where at present only stock assessment advice is taken into account (if at all). Thus, the ultimate goal of the network should be to provide the scientific grounds upon which to link management advice to sound scientific information, thus creating an ecosystem knowledge based management approach. By establishing successful liaisons with local and regional organizations and initiatives, needing scientific advice to promote EAF, the scientific network could contribute to the management of territorial units and provide a stable platform to share successful stories, resources, ideas, and expertise. The network could facilitate the discussion of common problems and possible solutions with local applicability in a coordinated manner and under a common regional vision and strategy. Scientists involved in early practices of EAF could find in the network a suitable platform for networking among themselves to learn tactics on how to implement EAF at the local level, while also building a strategy at regional level. The ultimate goal should be to link management advice to good scientific information and transform policy strategies and goals into operational objectives. Another important role of the network would be to anticipate the needs of stakeholders – both local communities and managers - and the global changes that may occur in the future in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

The network should also be used as an opportunity to anticipate the future and invest in tools such as generic and validated models and indicators. In this manner scientists would be able to contribute to initiatives and calls for predicting the dynamics of the ocean, and building scenarios of socio-ecological systems. Indeed, it is already clear that in a few years, scientists will have to provide integrated and multidisciplinary scientific advice on possible future scenarios and the available alternatives to avoid adverse changes in ecosystems and ecosystem services, integrating data on ecology, climate, socioeconomics, and demographics. These tools will enable us to investigate the future of the region, and analyse how to reconcile long-term objectives with local constraints (exploring trade-offs with a suite of socioeconomic and ecological objectives) following the successful initiative of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPBES). There is thus a clear need to start building on the capability to integrate, modify, improve, innovate, fit and calibrate complex models and frameworks, which will require the promotion of data integration, harmonization, and accessibility. The scientific community has to advance towards can build a roadmap of coordinated actions to develop a common strategy and advance towards the future; and the EMBASEAS network may be a good opportunity to achieve this.

The group decided to develop a series of immediate activities to promote EMBASEAS:

- (i) The distribution of workshop material and discussions using scientific literature, and the CREAM website (<http://www.cream-fp7.eu/>). This distribution should be kept after the end of CREAM initiative;
- (ii) The development of a newsletter to communicate and promote the activities of the network, and inform EAF initiatives in the Mediterranean and Black Seas region;
- (iii) The design of a website to present and promote EMBASEAS;
- (iv) The coordination of efforts to answer to future research calls at the European level to fully implement the scientific network envisaged by the group;

The CREAM partnership:

- Recognizing that EAF is, probably, the only way to manage Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries in an long-term and shared efficient manner;
- Realizing the wide disparity among the Region's countries in terms of socio-economic conditions and the human, physical, and administrative capacities existing in these countries;
- Learning from the experiences of other regions and/or countries clearly emphasizes the effectiveness of adopting the concepts included in EAF;
- Noting the need for generation and exchange of information on marine ecosystems issues;
- Recognizing that marine ecosystems are trans-boundary and require effective regional cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders;

Have agreed in Barcelona on April 8th, 2014 to constitute a Network on EAF for the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The Network shall be guided by the following Constitutional Framework:

Network Name

The name of the network shall be “EMBASEAS: a scientific network in support of the application of EAF in the Mediterranean and Black Seas”, hereinafter referred to as the “Network”.

Objectives

1. The overall objective of the Network is enhanced technical co-operation among concerned national, regional and intergovernmental organizations, particularly the exchange of information and experience among the members

Specific objectives include:

- (a) Promoting the scientific approach of EAF by coordinating activities, and improving the capacity of developing science for EAF in the region;
- (b) Establishing bridges between scientists, policy makers, and other users of the sea, in a transversal way;
- (c) Providing scientific advice for the application of an EAF at all levels and to inform adaptive management in the region;
- (d) Facilitating the development of national, sub-regional and regional research project proposals to address EAF;
- (e) Streamlining exchange of information on monitoring tools and data among members;
- (f) Disseminating information among concerned organizations/institutions on EAF issues, and promoting professional contacts, study tours, expert meetings, training courses, etc.;
- (g) Coordinate activities with other relevant regional and international research networks.

Functions/Activities

2. In pursuance with the above objectives, the Network shall assume the following functions:
 - (a) Produce an EMBASEAS newsletter (e.g., every six months) that will produce the link between the different stakeholders; communicate scientific results or methodology, implementation and experimental results on EAF and communicate information throughout the network;
 - (b) Convene periodic meetings for the executive committee to discuss the Network work plans, evaluate programmes and their implementation;
 - (c) Organize, alone or jointly with other collaborating agencies, working sessions, workshops and seminars on specific scientific aspects of EAF and prepare thematic studies;
 - (d) Promote joint collaborative scientific activities among members to consolidate the linkages and synergy in resources utilization in research, training and networking,

Membership

3. The following can be members of the network:
 - (a) Institutions, and individuals within these institutions, including public sector, NGOs and private sector in the Region;
 - (b) Regional and intergovernmental organizations involved in similar activities and operating in the region. GFCM, BSC and FAO will be expressly invited to be members of the network. Although IAMZ–CIHEAM will be one of the EMBASEAS founders (see below), this organization will be considered as one of those mentioned in this Article 3 (b) given its intergovernmental nature;
 - (c) Other relevant organizations or bodies as may be decided by the Network.

Eligible Institutions and individuals may join the Network by submitting a request of membership to the Coordinator subject to approval by the Network Steering Committee.

CREAM Partners (IAMZ–CIHEAM, CSIC, HCMR, CIBM, IFREMER, IRD, IEO, CNR, INRH, INSTM, EGE UNIV, NIMRD, IO BAS, VNIRO, YugNIRO, AU, IOR, AUB, MRRA, DFMR and WEFRI) submitting this request will be considered as EMBASEAS founders, although this character will not provide them comparative advantages over the other members of the Network.

Resources

4. The resources of the Network shall come from:
 - (a) Contributions made by the Members listed above, within available budgetary resources;
 - (b) Grants and donations from governments, funding agencies, individuals, national, regional, or regional and intergovernmental organizations, development banks and others, within available budgetary resources.

Structure

5. The Network will be structured into two Subnetworks:
 - (a) Mediterranean Subnetwork:
 - (b) Black Sea Subnetwork

Sub-networks will conduct its activities mainly within its main geographical region but will also join those conducted by the Network at large.

6. The organizational structure of the Inter-Regional Network will consist of:
 - (a) a Network Coordinator (NC). This person will have the support of his/her Institution to carry out his/her task.

- (b) a Steering Committee (SC), consisting of the Network Coordinator, a scientific representative of each of the two Subnetworks and a representative of each of the regional and intergovernmental organizations joining the network.
- (c) The members of the Network

Network Coordinator

7. The Network Coordinator (NC) is chosen by all the network members for a renewable period of four years, he/she should be from a Mediterranean or Black Sea scientific institution and will have the following tasks:
 - (a) Be the coordination and management entity for the network;
 - (b) Maintain the documentation on activities;
 - (c) In cooperation with SC organize collaborative activities, approved by the cooperating countries;
 - (d) Disseminate information by means of the Web site and a newsletter;
 - (e) In cooperation with International bodies, organize meetings, workshops, consultations, etc. at which progress and proposals for future work programmes will be examined;
 - (f) Prepare, every year, a progress report for general distribution to members on the progress of joint activities;
 - (g) Maintain liaison with other regional, non-governmental and international organizations concerned with Mediterranean ecosystem management and provide specialist advice on specific problems if needed.

Steering Committee

8. The Steering Committee will meet periodically, if funds are available every year, otherwise every two years, to review the progress achieved, problems encountered and future programme of activities. The Steering Committee Meeting should be held, whenever possible, in connection with workshops or technical meetings organized by Network (e.g. EUROMARINE+).
9. Following the Steering Committee Meeting a short report on the status and planned activities of the network will be submitted to the Network members.

Financial implications of the members

10. The Inter-Regional Network will be based on establishing cooperation within the ongoing national programmes. The collaborative research and documentation work to be carried out within the countries would be part of the national programmes which would already have been budgeted for.

11. However, each participating institute should be prepared to defray from its own budget, whatever expenses (for staff, equipment, etc.) could be needed to make its scientific contribution to joint projects, as well as for the purpose of the agreed cooperation in the field of documentation.
12. The inter-country technical meetings and training courses, which a country agrees to host, may require national funds to meet the cost in local currency. Such costs may include within-country transportation, board and lodging of participants and miscellaneous costs. The participating members may, in future, establish local currency funds to finance the hosting of inter-country technical meetings, training courses and study tours.

Regional and intergovernmental organizations participation

13. Regional and intergovernmental organizations joining the network will support and sponsor, within available budgetary resources, the plan for the establishment of the Network in collaboration with the participants.
14. Regional and intergovernmental organizations joining the network will have a catalytic role in this Network to promote exchange of information, expertise/experience. Within available budgetary resources, they will provide technical assistance and advice to Network participants, as may be requested, through the provision of services of technical officers, specialists and consultants for short assignments. Meetings can take place in any country of the Geographic Regions.
15. Regional and intergovernmental organizations joining the network will carefully follow the Network activities, mainly through the information supplied by the coordination and liaison centres and through personal contacts.
16. Regional and intergovernmental organizations joining the network, within available budgetary resources, may consider covering part of the cost of technical meetings, workshops and consultations, the printing and distribution of consultation documents and subsequent reports, and the follow-up activities of the network by the Coordinator and the Steering Committee.
17. Regional and intergovernmental organizations joining the network will be willing to cooperate constructively with all regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organization interested in the attainment of objects of the Network.

Decision-making

18. In the making of decisions concerning the Network's operation, a consensus amongst the members will be sought. Since such cooperation is founded on voluntary adherence of participating experts, no compulsion can be exerted by them. If a consensus amongst the members is not reached, the Steering Committee will make the decision.
19. The decisions that have implications for regional and intergovernmental organizations joining the network will need their approval.