



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



General Fisheries Commission
for the Mediterranean
Commission générale des pêches
pour la Méditerranée

How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected Blue Economy in the Black Sea region?

The fisheries & aquaculture sector: challenges and potential response actions

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ICBSS – BSEC – DGMARE workshop

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THE TWO PILLARS OF BLUE ECONOMY

What do fisheries and aquaculture represent for the Black Sea and what is the role of the GFCM?



Food and high quality protein for an increasing population



Employment for men, women and young people



Essential part of the fabric of coastal communities

Fisheries play an important social and economic role in the Black Sea, and the small-scale fleet dominates activities. BlackSea4Fish works with national fisheries institutes across the region to strengthen the sector's long-term social and environmental sustainability.

The Black Sea fleet



Revenue from capture fisheries



Employment onboard vessels



Landings from capture fisheries

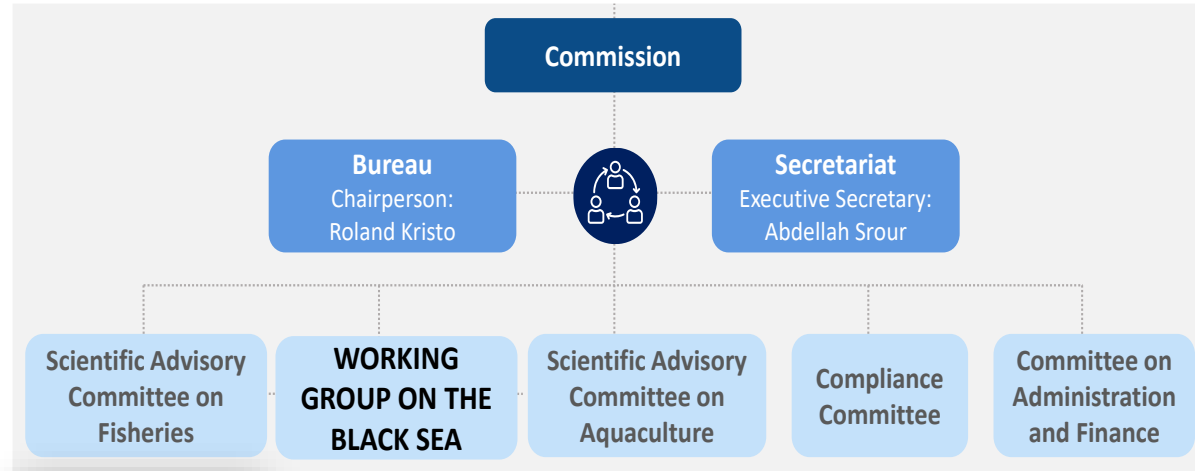


GFCM & the crucial role of international cooperation

GFCM OBJECTIVES:

- conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources
- sustainable development of aquaculture

Liaising with regional bodies and organizations:



Black Sea
Advisory
Council



Black Sea Economic
Cooperation



Black Sea
Commission






EuroFish



BS4F: a cooperative mechanism among scientists within the GFCM

- Increase scientific knowledge
- SSF
- Assess IUU
- Fisheries and environment
- Technical and institutional cooperation
- Subregional technical unit in Bulgaria

The impact of Covid-19 on fisheries and aquaculture

	Impact	Contributing factors
Fleet and Farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Up to 80% decrease in number of vessels operating- Aquaculture farm operations vary greatly	Physical restrictions <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Difficulty in complying with social distancing restrictions (particularly on board SSF)- Border closures preventing the transport of product (closure of export markets)
Production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More than 75% decrease in production in most countries- Change in target species (away from higher-value species destined to export markets, towards lower value species destined to local markets)	Major changes in demand: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Closure of Ho.Re.Ca sector- Changes in consumer preferences towards cheaper/canned products- temporary over-availability of fresh fish leading to wastage
Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- An initial 20-70% decline in prices (e.g. 50% decrease in price for turbot and John dory in Bulgaria)- Decline in prices for capture fisheries has had effect of decreasing ex-farm prices in some cases- 30-40% decline in aquaculture farm revenue- Certain species more acutely affected (e.g. shellfish, seabass and sea bream) due to restaurant closures	

The impact of Covid-19 on fisheries and aquaculture

Measures taken

Health and safety

- Closing ports and/or quarantining foreign vessels
- **Closure of open-air fish markets**
- Disinfecting ports and fishing boats
- Providing masks for workers
- Raising awareness among fishers and aquaculture farmers about **sanitary measures** (e.g. washing hands and ensuring social distancing on board).

Market

- Measures to ensuring the continuity of food supply
- Expansion of **home delivery and direct sales**
- Support to national and local production through **consumer awareness campaigns**

Mitigation of economic impacts

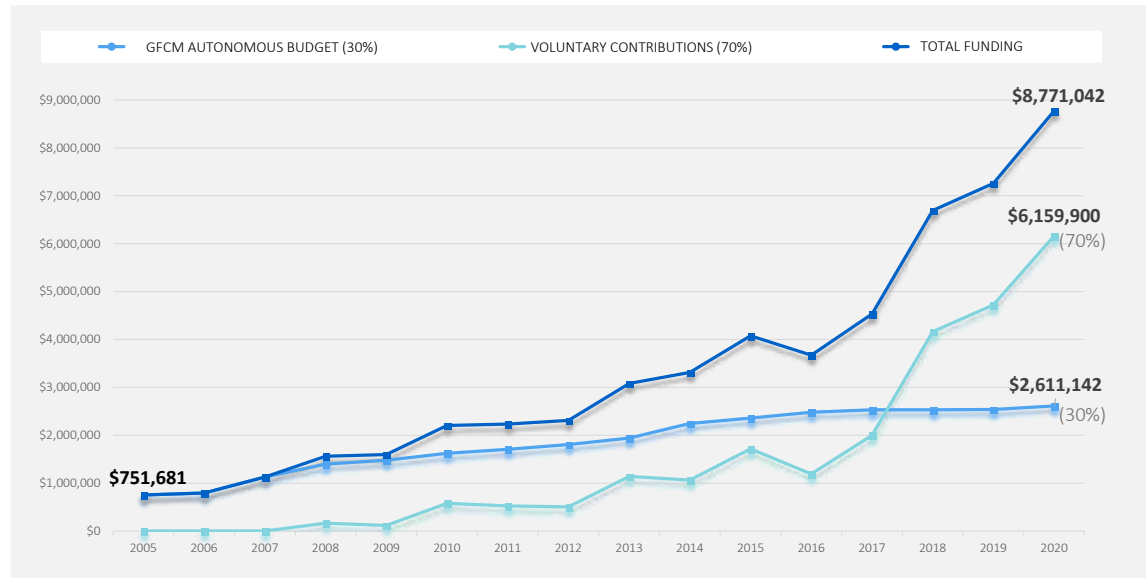
- **Social protection** measures, including:
 - Social assistance (e.g. **cash transfers**)
 - Social insurance (e.g. **health insurance**)
 - Labour market programmes (e.g. **unemployment benefits**)
- Enhanced **investment** in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors



The sector has recovered somewhat since this initial phase: but effects are ongoing and continue to evolve

Success stories

Increase in funding



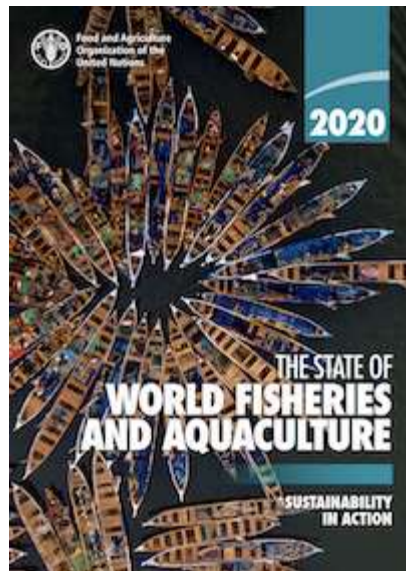
GLOBAL
ENVIRONMENT
FUND



- **BlackSea4Fish project** is providing crucial support to countries to perform the technical work needed to fulfil the requirements of recommendations (e.g. Rapa whelk research programme)
- **Turbot multiannual management plan** with the establishment of a whole-of-Black Sea Total Allowable Catch and a mechanism to determine country quotas
- **Aquaculture Demonstration Centres**
 - raise the awareness on the aquaculture potentials in BS
 - useful tool for administrations to assess new projects
 - consider the different levels of development, conditions and expertise in different countries

Key messages

- **Covid-19** represents an acute shock which tested the **resilience of the fisheries and aquaculture sector**: underlined strengths and weak points for ensuring a resilient sector
- **How to equip the sector to be more resilient in the face of future shocks?** (e.g. continued effects of Covid-19, climate change, etc.)



- Need for **better management** and more **attention to social issues**, also underlined by SOFIA 2020
- Double down on key areas of work:
 - Sustainable **fisheries management**
 - Strengthening cooperatives and **engaging stakeholders in decision-making**
 - **Market innovations**, including direct selling
 - **Social protection** to reduce vulnerability and ensure capacity to respond to future shocks



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Thank you for your attention

For more information:

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