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FAO opens Adriatic unit to strengthen fisheries management

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

New Croatia-based unit will support science, regional cooperation and fisheries management across six countries sharing the Adriatic Sea

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has opened a new fisheries unit in Croatia to support scientific cooperation and fisheries management among six Adriatic countries.

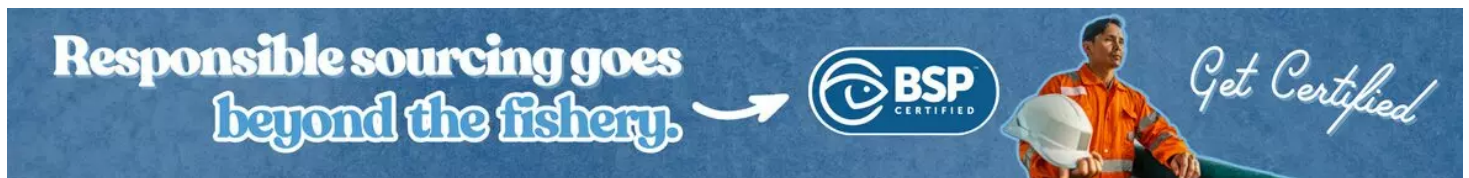
The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), a regional fisheries management organization of FAO, officially inaugurated its Adriatic Sea Technical Unit in Split, Croatia. The unit will provide a permanent presence in the region to support scientific cooperation, implementation of fisheries management measures and coordination among Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia.

The opening comes as fisheries across the Mediterranean face pressures from fishing activity, growing demand for aquatic foods and climate change. FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said cooperation among countries and reliable scientific information will be important for addressing those challenges.



The FAO has opened a new Adriatic Sea unit in Croatia to support science-based fisheries management and cooperation among six countries. Photo credit: ©FAO/Giuseppe Carotenuto

“Strong science remains at the centre of progress,” Dongyu said, emphasizing that reliable data, research and innovative approaches to assessment and management are essential to turning knowledge into measurable results.



(<https://bspcertification.org/>).

The new unit will support scientific research, data collection, stock assessments and coordinated management and conservation measures in the Adriatic. It will also contribute to MedSea4Fish, the GFCM's capacity development program, which supports technical expertise, institutional capacity and knowledge-sharing across the region.



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The initiative builds on fisheries management efforts implemented by GFCM members over the past decade. According to FAO, 11 management plans and a range of spatial measures have been adopted to support sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources and protect vulnerable marine ecosystems and essential fish habitats.

FAO reported that fish stock biomass has increased by about 25 percent, while the share of overexploited stocks declined from 87 percent in 2013 to 52 percent in 2023.

The Adriatic has played a role in those management efforts. The region was the setting for the GFCM's first multiannual management plan in 2013 and has since been used to implement spatial management measures.

The unit will also contribute to FAO's Blue Transformation initiative, which focuses on improving fisheries management, developing aquaculture responsibly and strengthening aquatic food value chains.

"We are here in Split," Dongyu said. "But we are not split – we are, in fact, more united towards efficient, inclusive and sustainable approaches to the fisheries in the Adriatic Sea."

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