



# Mediterranean Forum For Applied Ecosystem-Based Management

Blue crab, a new economic resource: Exploitation,  
valorisation and sustainability

Fifth Awareness-raising/sensitization activity at target area



Ghraiba Delegation, Sfax, Tunisia, May 25, 2023





The Awareness-raising/sensitization event “**Blue crab, a new economic resource: Exploitation, valorisation and sustainability**” is executed within the framework of the activities of Work Package 2, COMMUNICATION, of the project "Mediterranean Forum For Applied Ecosystem-Based Management" (MED4EBM).

## 1. Background

The invasive blue swimming crab *Portunus segnis* is a voracious predator that wreaks havoc on bottom ecosystems, shreds fishermen's nets, and ruins their catches. It was first observed in the Gulf of Gabès (south-eastern Tunisia, Eastern Mediterranean Sea) at the end of 2014, where, it has proliferated rapidly, and has quickly grown into an important fishery (during the peak season, it accounted for more than 70% of the catch).

In Tunisia, this species went from a problem to a resource, through specific investments and projects. Since 2019, factories for processing and marketing blue crab to Asian, European, and American markets have settled in the region (Kerkennah, Sfax, Mahrès, Skhira), resulting in economic growth and progress. The blue crab offers a new source of income for the families of fishermen whose livelihoods are impacted by its overpopulation.

The sector continues to draw significant commercial interest, and measures to control the exploitation of this valuable resource must be implemented.

## 2. Objectives:

This event will include blue crab exploitation stakeholders and aims to raise awareness among fishermen and investors in Kneiss islands area (Mahrès, Ghraiba and Skhira) on:


- Marine biodiversity and ecosystem conservation
- Control of the blue crab exploitation and valorisation
- The best fishing approaches for rational and sustainable blue crab fishing.
- The relevance of maintaining blue crab product quality.
- The effect of static fishing gear on marine populations and ecosystems.

## 3. Target beneficiaries:

Fishermen, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (**DGPA**), Regional Commissariat for Agricultural Development (**CRDA**), Interprofessional Grouping of Fishery Products (**GIPP**), Group of development of fishing (**GDP**), **INSTM** researchers and **NGOs**.



#### 4. Agenda

Time 	Session
09:00 – 09:30	<b>Welcome remarks and presentation of the event program.</b> <i>M. Sofien Abdouli, Ghraiba Delegation.</i> <i>Dr. Amel Bellaaj Zouari, MED4EBM Project National Coordinator.</i>
09:30 – 10:00	<b>“Blue crab fishery management”.</b> <i>Ms. Ines Ben Hafssia, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture.</i>
10:00 – 10:30	<b>“The development of the blue crab system in the governorate of Medenine: towards good fishing practices and maintaining product quality”.</b> <i>M. Fethi Naloufi, Interprofessional Grouping of Fishery Products, Medenine.</i>
10:30 – 11:00	<b>“The GIPP's role in the national strategy and the promotion of a new blue crab sector in Tunisia”</b> <i>M. Ali Atitallah, Interprofessional Grouping of Fishery Products, Sfax.</i>
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Coffee break</b> 
11:30 – 12:00	<b>“Prospects for the exploitation and valorisation of blue crab “</b> <i>M. Sassi Alya, Group of Fishing Development, Ghannouch.</i>
12:00 – 12:30	<b>“The importance of the exploitation of the swimming blue crab Portunus segnis and good creel fishing practices.”</b> <i>Dr. Marouene Bdioui, National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies, Fisheries Science Laboratory.</i>
12:30 – 13:00	<b>“The Blue crab exploitation: an opportunity to be taken!”</b> <i>Dr. Olfa Ben Abdallah, National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies, Fisheries Science Laboratory.</i>
13:00 – 13:30	<b>“Promoting the processing and recovery of marine biomass: the cross-border initiative of the ARIBiotech project.”</b> <i>Dr. Salwa Sadok, National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies, Blue Biotechnology &amp; Aquatic Bioproducts laboratory.</i>
13:30 – 14:00	<b>Review and finalization of key messages</b>
14:00	<b>Closing of the event</b>