MINISTRY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan for Bottom Otter Trawl Fishery

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Annex I

Detailed list of Bottom otter trawl fishing vessels[1]

[1] Annex I is not being published online to ensure confidentiality of data. It may be reviewed at the offices of the Intermediate Body.

List of Abbreviations

AFM:	Armed Forces of Malta
CFP:	Common Fisheries Policy
EFF:	European Fisheries Fund
EU:	European Union
DFA:	Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
F:	Fishing mortality (index of the quantity of fish killed by fishing)
F0.1:	The fishing mortality (amount of fish killed) for the maximum sustainable harvest (highest production of fish). This is the target reference point for the fishery
Fmax:	The ultimate fishing mortality which can be supported by the fishery, beyond this point the fishery is over fishing the stock.
FEAP:	Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan
FMZ:	Fisheries Management Zone
FPO:	Fisheries Protection Officer
FVR:	Fishing Vessels Register
GT:	Gross Tonnage
IB:	Intermediate Body for European Fisheries Fund
kW:	Kilowatts
LOA:	Length overall
MFA:	Registration in Fishing Vessels Registry denoting Commercial Full-Time vessels
MFB:	Registration in Fishing Vessels Registry denoting Commercial Part-Time vessels
MPF:	Malta Police Force
NM:	Nautical Mile
VMS:	Vessels Monitoring System

1. Introduction

This Fisheries Effort Adjustment Plan (FEAP) defines the actions that the Maltese fisheries administration intends to take to implement the measures defined and described in the Maltese Fisheries Management Plan (Action Plan) as per Art 19 of the Mediterranean Regulation EC 1967/2006.

It presents the actions aimed to reduce the bottom otter trawl fleet in order to achieve a more sustainable bottom otter trawl fishery sector.

The planned reduction of the fishing effort in bottom otter trawl fishery between 2013 and 2015, is the backbone of the Maltese Fisheries' conservation actions in this sector.

2. Description of the Bottom otter trawl Fisheries in Malta (Fleet and Fishing Areas)

2.1 The Maltese Bottom otter trawl Fleet

The trawler fleet authorised to fish within the 25 NM FMZ consists of 12 boats having an overall tonnage of 1,056 GT, a total main engine power of 3,700 kW and provides 59 jobs.[2] This represents less than 2% of the number of vessels registered in the Commercial fishing register. The vessels in this fleet are on average 22m long, have an average tonnage of 88 GT and average engine power of over 300kW.[3] (See Annex I for a comprehensive list of these vessels).

In 2011, trawler production amounted to almost 171 metric tonnes (€1.6 million in value terms), which represents 8% of total landings but less than 14% of its selling value. Landings from Red Shrimps (*Aristeomorpha foliacea*), Red Mullet (*Mullus spp.*) and pink shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) represent 23%, 18% and 12% of the trawler landings respectively.

	No of Vessels	**GT**	**KW (main eng.)**
MFA	12	1,057.65	3,700.59
MFB	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total	**12**	**1,057.65**	**3,700.59**

Source: Community Fleet Register

2.2 Fishing Areas

Fishing occurs within the Maltese 25 nautical miles as per Annex V of EC Council Regulation No 1967/2006.

3. Conditions of the Bottom otter trawl (and stock)

Available landings data for the Maltese trawl fishery contains records of at least 128 different taxa.

An analysis of trends in total landings of important target species (giant red shrimp, pink shrimp, hake, red mullet and striped red mullet), compared to landings of all other species combined during 2006-2011, revealed that (1) landings of giant red shrimp remained relatively stable during 2006-2010 but increased in 2011, (2) pink shrimp and hake landings underwent several fluctuations during the six year period analysed, (3) landings of red mullet and striped red mullet combined, increased considerably during 2006-2008, and have been steadily decreasing since, and (4) there has been an important increase in the relative contribution to total landings by other species. The latter effect is due to an increase in landings of a variety of species, of which six were of particular importance during 2006-2011: common cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*), blue whiting (*Micromesistius pouassou*), Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*), common pandora (*Pagellus erythriunus*), golden shrimp (*Plesionika martia*) and unicorn octopus (*Scaergus unicirrhus*).

[2] Management Plan as published by Government Notice No. 923
[3] Management Plan as published by Government Notice No. 923

Stock assessments were carried out at a regional level. All of the assessed stocks were overexploited. For the demersal species, the Maltese trawling fleet is overall catching the amount of fish expected under desirable fishing mortality rates from the entire national fleet. Nevertheless, the same results also indicate that while Malta is fishing the pink shrimp, the fleet is overexploiting stocks above $F_{0.1}$ levels - both for the giant red shrimp and hake.

However, when taking into account the Maltese share of total landings made in the Central Mediterranean and for the demersal species, it is clear that any action taken by the Maltese authorities to address the overexploitation will not have an effect on the status of the stock.

4. Legal Framework

This Bottom otter trawl Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan takes into consideration the following:

- Mediterranean Regulation 1967/2006
- The provisions of Articles 21 and 22 of the EFF Regulation 1198/2006;
- Commission Regulation 498/2007;
- Articles 6 and 9 of the CFP Basic Regulation;
- Chapters II and III of Council Regulation 2371/2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy; and
- Government Notice No. 923 issued in the Government Gazette dated 1st October 2013.
- Government Notice No. 354 issued in the Government Gazette dated 25 October 2013.

In this way, we will adjust the Bottom otter trawl fishing capacity in order to achieve a stable and sustainable balance between fishing opportunities and fishing capacity, by reducing the GT and kW in our Bottom otter trawl fishing sector.

5. Expected results in terms of fishing effort levels

The Maltese authorities have decided to opt for a 20% (2 vessels) reduction of the fleet equivalent to 504.24KW and 95.05GT through permanent cessation whilst the temporary cessation of one month closed season will be implemented as from 2014 for the next three years.

6. Measures contemplated in the FEAP

Measures for the adaptation of the community fishing fleet in our Fisheries Operational Programme include the permanent cessation of fishing activities under Priority Axis 1 of the European Fisheries Fund 2007 – 2013. The rationale for this measure is the sustainable utilisation of fisheries' resources and fleet management. Malta faces a number of challenges in terms of:

- Reaching a balance between fisheries resources and fishing capacity;
- An aging fishing fleet; and
- The seasonal nature of the fishing activity.

The general objective of this measure, which will be implemented in the framework of this Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan, is to adjust the fishing capacity of the Maltese registered bottom otter trawl fishing fleet, and to manage the fishing effort in accordance with the aims of the Common Fisheries Policy. The adjustment of fishing effort during period 2013-2015 will be achieved through:

- Reduction of a number of bottom otter trawl fishing permits;
- Permanent decommissioning of bottom otter trawl fishing vessels currently actively involved in the actual take up of wild fish stocks, are 5 years old or over and are in the MFA or MFB category;

The permanent cessation of fishing activities of a fishing vessel may be achieved only by:

- Scrapping of the fishing vessel;
- Reassignment under the flag of a Member State Registered in the Community for activities outside fishing activities;
- The reassignment of the vessel for the purpose of the creation of artificial reefs;

Other permanent cessation actions, apart from the ones mentioned above, unless planned for by other FEAPs, shall not be eligible for funding.

The Maltese Authorities also intend to implement a temporary cessation measure to reduce the effort by 10% reduction in capacity and the reduction in effort by a further 20% through the introduction of a temporary cessation for the period spanning from 15 August to 15 September.

7. Control measures and expected results

The control measures employed by the Maltese authorities include:

- The maintenance of a database containing data relevant to the bottom otter trawl fishing fleet;
- Control and enforcement measures taken by the Armed Forces of Malta and the Malta Police Force (According to Chapter 425 of the National Legislation (Fisheries Conservation and Management) (Cap. 425), all members of the AFM and MPF are Fisheries Protection Officers (FPOs) for the purpose of the act);
- A Vessel Monitoring system has been installed on all fishing vessels over 12 meters in length, providing two hourly coverage of movements of all such vessels when engaged in fishing activity;
- Supervision at designated ports, and at the national fish market by the FPOs

These control measures are leading to a more stringent and effective control of the fishing activity carried out by the Maltese bottom otter trawl fishing fleet. This ensures that the relevant EU and National regulations are observed.

8. Duration, monitoring and reporting of Bottom otter trawl fishing Effort Adjustment Plan – Permanent Cessation Scheme

8.1 Duration

The duration of the present FEAP is set at 2013-2015, being consistent with the implementation of the EFF in Malta.

8.2 Monitoring

The Maltese authorities are fully committed to the approved management regime for the bottom otter trawl fisheries in view of its risk of over exploitation, and its importance to the local fishing industry. The implementation of the Permanent Cessation Scheme shall be monitored using the tools offered by the European Fisheries Fund monitoring system, such as the reporting obligations in the main EC Regulation (annual implementation report and mid-term evaluation report), as well as regular meetings of the EFF Monitoring Committee.

The IB for EFF will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the grant schemes to be co-funded by the EFF. Site visits (on the spot controls) will be made to verify the consistency between submitted documents and actual works carried out. Controls will be put in place to ensure that all conditions linked to the permanent cessation of bottom otter trawl fishing vessels are applied in a proper manner and the relative fishing licenses and gears are permanently decommissioned.

8.3 Reporting

According to the EFF Regulation 1198/2006 Article 67, by 30th June each year, the Managing Authority shall submit an annual report on the implementation of the Operational Programme to the Commission. This report will include the status vis-à-vis the implementation on the ground, and will include appropriate comments showing the actual reduction in the number of bottom otter trawl licenses, the reduction of both the GT and the engine power (expressed in kW) from the Malta Fishing Register.

9. Duration, Monitoring and reporting of Bottom Otter trawl fishing effort adjustment plan – temporary cessation measure

9.1 Duration

The Director will issue by publication in the Government Gazette on a year by year basis an administrative temporary cessation measure for the control of the bottom otter trawl fishery in order to ensure its sustainability. When deemed necessary by the Director, the trawling fishery will be subject to an administrative temporary permanent cessation measure from 15th August to 15th September. This shall be obligatory for the years 2014-2016.

9.2 Monitoring

The vessels in question will be controlled through the monitoring of VMS and AIS transmissions and port inspections by Fisheries Protection Officers. Any vessels in breach of the cessation order will be ordered to port and the necessary legal actions taken against the master of the vessel.

9.3 Reporting

A yearly report will be drawn up to include the status vis-à-vis the implementation on the ground and will include appropriate comments including the capacity effectively reduced through the administrative temporary cessation measure, the number of inspections carried out and any breaches found.

10. Other Measures

Other measures of reduction of fishing effort such as the reduction of fishing days, closed seasons etc., may be introduced in line with EC Regulations and National Legislation, as deemed appropriate.

11. Conclusion

This Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan will lead to a reduction of fishing capacity of the Maltese bottom otter trawl fishing fleet, as a result of the implementation of the permanent cessation and temporary cessation measures. This will contribute to a reduction in negative environmental impacts.

The general objective of this FEAP is to adjust the fishing capacity of the Maltese registered bottom otter trawl fishing fleet, and to manage the fishing effort in accordance with the aims of the Common Fisheries Policy, resulting in a more sustainable fishing sector.

22nd November, 2013

MINISTRY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan for Lampara Fishery

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8. Duration, monitoring and reporting of Lampara Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan – Permanent Cessation Scheme

9. Other Measures

10. Conclusions

Annex I

Detailed list of Lampara fishing vessels[1]

[1] Annex I is not being published online to ensure confidentiality of data. It may be reviewed at the offices of the Intermediate Body.

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Fmax:	The ultimate fishing mortality which can be supported by the fishery, beyond this point the fishery is over fishing the stock.
FEAP:	Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan
FMZ:	Fisheries Management Zone
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kW:	Kilowatts
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1. Introduction

This Fisheries Effort Adjustment Plan (FEAP) defines the actions that the Maltese fisheries administration intends to take to implement the measures defined and described in the Maltese Fisheries Management Plan (Action Plan) as per Art 19 of the Mediterranean Regulation EC 1967/2006.

It presents the actions aimed to reduce the lampara fishing fleet in order to achieve a more sustainable lampara fishing sector.

The planned reduction of the fishing effort in lampara fishery between 2013 and 2015 is the backbone of the Maltese Fisheries' conservation actions in this sector.

2. Description of the Lampara Fisheries in Malta (Fleet and Fishing Areas)

2.1 The Maltese Lampara Fishing Fleet

As at 2013 the lampara fleet consists of 17 boats having an overall tonnage of 510,63 GT, a total main engine power of 3,148.48 kW. The average for the fleet is of 15m length overall, with an average tonnage of 30 GT and average engine power of 185 kW.

In 2011, lampara production amounted to 176 metric tonnes (€191,000 in value terms) which represents 9% of total landings but less than 2% of the selling value. In the same year, landings from Chub Mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) and Round Sardinella (*Sardinella aurita*) represented 58% and 28% of the 'lampara' landings respectively.

	No of Vessels	**GT**	**KW (main eng.)**
MFA	17	510.63	3,148.48
MFB	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total	**17**	**510.63**	**3,148.48**

Source: Community Fleet Register, 2013

2.2 Fishing Areas

Fishing occurs within the Maltese 25 nautical miles.

3. Conditions of the Lampara fisheries (and stock)

All stocks targeted by the Maltese lampara fishery are stocks shared with Sicily due to the population distribution over the Malta Bank, which connects the Maltese Islands with Sicily.

Stock assessment information for the Central Mediterranean is at present not available for Chub Mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) and Round Sardinella (*Sardinella aurita*). Stock assessments of the relevant species will thus have to be carried out in collaboration with Italy.

Malta's contributions towards catches of these species are below 10 % for the majority of the species except for *Sardinella aurita* which is slightly higher (24.9%). This slightly higher percentage can be attributed to the grouping of clupeoids under one name in Maltese landings data.

4. Legal Framework

This Lampara Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan takes into consideration the following:

- Mediterranean Regulation 1967/2006
- The provisions of Articles 21 and 22 of the EFF Regulation 1198/2006;

- Commission Regulation 498/2007;
- Articles 6 and 9 of the CFP Basic Regulation;
- Chapters II and III of Council Regulation 2371/2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy; and
- Government Notice No. 923 issued in the Government Gazette dated 1st October 2013.
- Government Notice No. 354 issued in the Government Gazette dated 25 October 2013.

In this way, we will adjust the Lampara fishing capacity in order to achieve a stable and sustainable balance between fishing opportunities and fishing capacity, by reducing the GT and KW in the Maltese Lampara fishing sector.

5. Expected results in terms of fishing effort levels

The Maltese authorities have decided to opt for a 20% (3 vessels) reduction of the fleet equivalent to 104.44KW and 4.90GT through permanent cessation which is to be concluded by end of 2015.

***6*. Measures contemplated in the FEAP**

Measures for the adaptation of the community fishing fleet in our Fisheries Operational Programme include the permanent cessation of fishing activities under Priority Axis 1 of the European Fisheries Fund 2007 – 2013. The rationale for this measure is the sustainable utilisation of fisheries' resources and fleet management. Malta faces a number of challenges in terms of:

- Reaching a balance between fisheries resources and fishing capacity;
- An aging fishing fleet; and
- The seasonal nature of the fishing activity.

The general objective of this measure, which will be implemented in the framework of this Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan, is to adjust the fishing capacity of the Maltese registered lampara fishing fleet, and to manage the fishing effort in accordance with the aims of the Common Fisheries Policy. The adjustment of fishing effort during period 2013-2015 will be achieved through:

- Reduction of a number of lampara fishing permits;
- Permanent decommissioning of lampara fishing vessels currently actively involved in the actual take up of wild fish stocks, are 5 years old or over and are in the MFA category;

The permanent cessation of fishing activities of a fishing vessel may be achieved only by:

- Scrapping of the fishing vessel;
- Reassignment under the flag of a Member State Registered in the Community for activities outside fishing activities;
- The reassignment of the vessel for the purpose of the creation of artificial reefs;

Other permanent cessation actions, apart from the ones mentioned above, unless planned for by other FEAPs, shall not be eligible for funding.

7. Control measures and expected results

The control measures employed by the Maltese authorities include:

- The maintenance of a database containing data relevant to the lampara fishing fleet;
- Control and enforcement measures taken by the Armed Forces of Malta and the Malta Police Force (According to Chapter 425 of the National Legislation (Fisheries Conservation and Management) (Cap. 425), all members of the AFM and MPF are Fisheries Protection Officers (FPOs) for the purpose of the act);
- Irrespective of their length overall, all lampara vessels are fitted with a tracking system and are requested to complete a catch logbook in order to better monitor their fishing activity. In addition the fishing capacity in terms of GT and dimensions of the gear are not allowed to increase;
- Supervision at designated ports, and at the national fish market by the FPOs

These control measures are leading to a more stringent and effective control of the fishing activity carried out by the Maltese lampara fishing fleet. This ensures that the relevant EU and National regulations are observed.

8. Duration, monitoring and reporting of Lampara fishing Effort Adjustment Plan – Permanent Cessation Scheme

8.1 Duration

The duration of the present FEAP is set at 2013-2015, being consistent with the implementation of the EFF in Malta.

8.2 Monitoring

The Maltese authorities are fully committed to the approved management regime for the lampara fisheries in view of its risk of over exploitation, and its importance to the local fishing industry. The implementation of the Permanent Cessation Scheme shall be monitored using the tools offered by the European Fisheries Fund monitoring system, such as the reporting obligations in the main EC Regulation (annual implementation report and mid-term evaluation report), as well as regular meetings of the EFF Monitoring Committee.

The IB for EFF will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the grant schemes to be co-funded by the EFF. Site visits (on the spot controls) will be made to verify the consistency between submitted documents and actual works carried out. Controls will be put in place to ensure that all conditions linked to the permanent cessation of lampara fishing vessels are applied in a proper manner and the relative fishing licenses and gears are permanently decommissioned.

8.3 Reporting

According to the EFF Regulation 1198/2006 Article 67, by 30th June each year, the Managing Authority shall submit an annual report on the implementation of the Operational Programme to the Commission. This report will include the status vis-à-vis the implementation on the ground, and will include appropriate comments showing the actual reduction in the number of lampara licenses, the reduction of both the GT and the engine power (expressed in kW) from the Malta Fishing Register.

9. Other Measures

Other measures of reduction of fishing effort such as the reduction of fishing days, closed seasons etc., may be introduced in line with EC Regulations and National Legislation, as deemed appropriate.

10. Conclusion

This Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan will lead to a reduction of fishing capacity of the Maltese lampara fishing fleet, as a result of the implementation of the permanent cessation scheme. This will contribute to a reduction in negative environmental impacts.

The general objective of this FEAP is to adjust the fishing capacity of the Maltese registered lampara fishing fleet, and to manage the fishing effort in accordance with the aims of the Common Fisheries Policy, resulting in a more sustainable fishing sector.

22nd November, 2013