



Press Release

Pioneering gender equality: an empowerment programme drives women's leadership in sustainable aquaculture development

Athens, Greece, 18 June 2023

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the [Initiative of European Aquaculture Producers \(IEAP\)](#) and the [Mediterranean Aquaculture Producers Organisation \(MAPC\)](#) are pleased to announce the "Empowering women towards sustainable aquaculture development" programme, taking place in Greece from 21 to 28 June 2023. Building upon the remarkable achievements of the [previous activity](#) held in Tunisia in 2022, this second endeavour remains dedicated to the ongoing empowerment and comprehensive support of young women in the thriving aquaculture sector.

Aquaculture plays a critical role in the economic development and food security of the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, with women making significant contributions across various areas of the industry, from fish farming production to research. However, their contributions often go unrecognized and they face limited opportunities for education and advancement. The GFCM [2022 Strategy](#) for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea acknowledges the importance of women's contributions and, along with Resolution (GFCM/W/2022/1) on empowering women in the aquaculture sector, emphasizes the need to address the existing disparities and limited opportunities they face.

"Women are a powerhouse of untapped potential in the aquaculture sector. Their unique perspectives and skills can drive Blue transformation and sustainable growth", said Mousumi Nathoo, GFCM Aquaculture Officer.

The upcoming activity in Greece will provide a platform for young women from the region to acquire valuable knowledge and hands-on experience in the field of aquaculture. It will consist of a series of theoretical sessions focused on sharing best practices, highlighting the importance of women's involvement in the sector and showcasing the GFCM, IEAP and MAPC' approach to sustainable aquaculture development. Furthermore, the participants will have the opportunity to engage in field visits across Greece to enhance their understanding of the sector by exploring different Mediterranean aquaculture environments, species, and production systems.

"Enabling women to advance their education and experience in aquaculture, while connecting them with top industry professionals from different regions in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, is vital for nurturing the next generation of aquaculture experts", said Lara Flores, IEAP president.

By empowering women in aquaculture, the GFCM, IEAP and MAPC drives to advance IMO's Blue Transformation vision, which aims to establish resilient and sustainable aquatic food systems.