Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
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BlueBRIDGE project, building innovative data services for fisheries, aquaculture, ecosystem management, and food system analysis

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Rome 27 October 2015. By some standards, the world's Oceans are the seventh largest economy. However, it is an economy at risk, and sometimes poorly managed fisheries, climate change and pollution, amongst others, damage its carrying capacity. To address these issues, a challenge is to support decision making with facts and evidence built across multiple scientific disciplines. The BlueBRIDGE project uses European Horizon 2020 funds to support fisheries, aquaculture, and ecosystem management with tools such as maps, statistics, and analytical models.

BlueBRIDGE - Building Research environments fostering Innovation, Decision making, Governance and Education in fisheries and marine sciences – provides web-based resources with a focus on sustainable growth and development. These resources will facilitate science-based policy formulation and evidence-based decision-making, and include:

- Online analytical tools and models to support scientific collaboration among working groups and institutions, including stock assessment methods and sustainable management strategies of data poor, small scale fisheries.
- A global register for stocks and fisheries, disseminating comprehensive information on the location, status and trends of fish stocks and fisheries;
- Support to aquaculture sites inventories and spatial planning using a combination of satellite data analysis and field collected information;
- Online analytical tools and models to support scientific collaboration among working groups and institutions include stock assessment methods and sustainable management strategies for data poor and small scale fisheries.

"These are just a few of the challenges BlueBRIDGE will address", says Marc Taconet from the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the UN FAO and Chair of the BlueBRIDGE External Advisory Board, "The development of smart solutions is important to support decision-makers in the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture by providing the knowledge production chain from data collection through aggregation and analysis to the generation of indicators. These solutions will bridge the work of international organizations and communities of scientists from different disciplines including fisheries, biology, economics, statistics, and environmental science."

"A knowledge production chain involves multidisciplinary scientific communities", says Donatella Castelli from the National Research Council in Italy and BlueBRIDGE project director, "BlueBRIDGE will transform how they co-operate by enabling collaboration and data alignment. Users from different sectors will benefit from data sharing and publication facilities as well as from powerful processing capabilities. As a result, users will have better access to knowledge at lower costs."

BlueBRIDGE will provide on-line training for the next generation of scientists. This is fundamental to build capacity in often resource-poor environments where these materials are difficult to find. BlueBRIDGE will also collaborate with 7 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) the establishment of a self-sustaining user community exploiting the data services.

BlueBRIDGE services have foundations in the iMarine initiative (www.i-marine.eu) and exploit the D4Science infrastructure (www.d4science.org) to capitalize on previous investments made by the European Commission and as a first step towards future sustainability . With the data, computational resources and the expertise of the consortium, BlueBRIDGE can really make a difference.

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