The SoleMon project is an experimental trawl survey that provides fishery independent data useful for the sustainable management of marine resources exploited by fisheries. The common sole is one of the target species of the survey and is one of the most commercially important species of FAO GFCM area (Mediterranean and Black Sea), which provides about 15% of the overall world catches. About 22% of GFCM area sole catches come from the Adriatic Sea and especially from the northern and central parts of this basin, which represent important areas of reproduction and spawning aggregation of sole. Despite the economic relevance of this resource and the fact that it is included in the SAC GFCM priority list of the Mediterranean species, in the priority list of the Adriatic shared resources of FAO AdriaMed project as well as in the EC action plan to reduce discards of fish in the Mediterranean, the current knowledge on its spatial and temporal distribution, stock biomass, migration, reproduction, life cycle, genetic structure of the population is full of gaps and derives from isolated and localized studies. Consequently, the current management measures aimed to the sustainable exploitation of the resource are very scarce. On the other hand, the programs for the stock assessment of the demersal resources currently performed in the Adriatic Sea (MEDIT e AdriaMed Trawl Survey) with bottom otter trawls, cannot give reliable data for the stock assessment of S. solea and other benthic resources. In fact, the comparison of data obtained from the rapido trawl surveys carried out inside the project funded by the Italian Government (MIPAF) and conducted by CNR-ISMAR of Ancona and ICRAM Chioggia (2004-2007) with those derived from similar investigations made at the same time and in the same area (MEDITs and AdriaMed Trawl Survey) clearly showed that rapido trawl is a more efficient tool for catching benthic species than otter trawl. Similarly, to other demersal species, in the Adriatic Sea the stock of S. solea is shared among all the Adriatic countries (Italia, Slovenia, Croatia, Albania and Montenegro) and, thus, it should be submitted to a common management plan. Because of this, the previous project funded by MIPAF was also supported by FAO-AdriaMed and extended to the Croatian coast, so to include the Croatian national waters. For the same reason, all the other Adriatic countries, Croatia included, have required to prolong and extend the project to the overall Adriatic Sea, under the FAO-AdriaMed umbrella. In fact, in 2007, the survey was also carried out in the southern Adriatic Sea with the cooperation of Montenegro and Albania. In 2017 the SoleMon survey officially entered in the EU-MAP framework and is co-financed by the European Commission. The objectives of the project, which includes all the Adriatic countries in GSA 17, are: to give density and biomass indexes for S. solea and other commercially important benthic species which are not adequately assessed by the other surveys for the stock assessment of the demersal resources. Moreover the survey data are useful to assess the stock of S. solea in the Adriatic Sea and produce maps of the spatial distribution of S. solea and other benthic species. The Solemon surveys can give information useful for the rational management and exploitation of S. solea and other benthic species; to provide biological samples to increase the actual knowledge on the biology and population genetic of S. solea. The SoleMon survey can provide biological samples to implement the actual knowledge on the trophic chains in the Adriatic Sea and data on the benthic biocenosis of the Adriatic Sea. Moreover, the data set of SoleMon is useful for the estimation of MFSD indicators, especially concerning Descriptors 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9 and 10.
