Annex B
Explanatory Memorandum

For the purpose of implementing the regionalised approach to Italian territorial waters, Italy submitted to the Commission services a Recommendation containing the following elements:
- A description of the fisheries covered by the discard plan;
- A derogation from the minimum conservation reference size as set out by Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006;
- Specific technical measures;
- Specific monitoring and control measures;

Notably:

1. With respect to the fishing effort, Italy operated a reduction in the overall fishing effort for Venus spp. fisheries by freezing the number of vessels authorised at the levels established in 2011 and by limiting the number of fishing days for Venus spp. to 4 days per week, per vessel. Italy also reduced the volume of the daily catch limitation applicable to each vessel from 600 kg to 400kg.

2. With respect to survivability issues, Italy provided with measures aiming at increasing the survivability of the Venus spp. stock. restocking areas shall be designated for the purpose of relocating specimens that are caught undersize. In restocking areas, mollusc fisheries shall be prohibited and a rotation of restocking areas shall be ensured. During fishing operations, caught specimen shall be subject to a first screening of their size at sea and to a second screening of their size at landing at a designated point.

3. With respect to scientific data collection, Italy introduced a system of continuous scientific research as regards restocking areas and the survivability and growth of relocated specimen. Scientific assessments will take place on a regular basis and at least three months after the restocking of caught undersize specimens.

4. With respect to technical measures, Italy has developed a pilot project with the aim of increasing the selectivity of the screening equipment for Venus spp.

fisheries.

5. With respect to control, Italy introduced additional elements in its national plan for control and monitoring of the Venus spp. fisheries, pursuant to which all vessels authorised for Venus spp. fisheries shall be equipped with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), all landings shall be carried out at designated landing sites, for inspection purposes, and all designated landing sites shall be equipped for the purpose of operating the second screening of the size of caught specimens. Furthermore, an inspection program shall be implemented in coordination with the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA). Italy will also establish a list of vessels in order to ensure appropriate control over the implementation of the landing obligation.

6. With respect to market measures, Italy introduced a system of certification by the consortia of producer organisations of landed specimens that comply with the minimum reference size.

7. Finally, Italian authorities shall evaluate annually the state of the Venus spp. fisheries, the effectiveness of the applicable technical measures and the state of implementation of the national inspection program.

8. Study on selectivity