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ASIA-PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION

Thirty-sixth Session

[virtual] Thailand, 5-7 May 2021

APFIC Strategic Plan 2018-2023



**THE ASIA PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION
STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2023:**

SIX YEARS
SIX PRINCIPLES
SIX THEMES
SIX GOALS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document contains the Strategic Plan for the Asia Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) for the period 2018-2023. The document may be abbreviated to “SP6” because it is a Strategic Plan (SP) for six years, , with six foundation principles, six priority themes and six target goals.

This strategic plan supports the overall **Goal** of the Commission *to promote the full and proper utilization of living aquatic resources by the development and management of fishing and culture operations and by the development of related processing and marketing activities in conformity with the objectives of its Members* and **Purpose** of the Commission *to act as a Regional Consultative Forum that works in partnership with other regional organizations and arrangements and members; to provide advice, coordinate activities and act as an information broker to increase knowledge of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia Pacific region to underpin decision making.*

The **six foundation principles** of the SP6 are:

- 1. APFIC will respond to the needs of its member countries;**
- 2. Cooperation and Collaboration among APFIC members, between the Commission and FAO HQ and between the Commission and its partner organisations;**
- 3. Information and data to be transparent, based on best science and clearly communicated;**
- 4. Cost Effectiveness, Timeliness and Results;**
- 5. Compliance with soft and hard law instruments; and**
- 6. Commit to Blue Growth principles and SDG goals.**

The **six operational goals** of the 2018-2023 strategic plan for APFIC’s marine capture fisheries, inland capture fisheries and aquaculture have been determined by listening to the priority concerns of the member countries and other regional partners. They are:

- 1. Improved and Renewed Collaborative Functioning of APFIC;**
- 2. Formalising regional partnerships;**
- 3. Improving fishery and aquaculture ecosystems and habitats, including addressing pollution, invasive species, fishing gear and climate change;**
- 4. Supporting small scale fisheries and aquaculture and a human rights-based approach to fisheries development;**
- 5. Combating IUU fishing and fisheries related crime; and**

6. *Improving fish food safety and fish trade.*

The SP6 is based on the premise that APFIC is currently at a watershed period in its long history. The Commission has survived for 70 years by not being complacent, and by being sufficiently flexible to respond to the changing geo-political, social and environmental factors at play in the region. These qualities of resilience are now needed more than ever before.

The Asia Pacific region is the most prolific fish producer in the world, but the twenty-one countries which comprise APFIC need help on a range of issues if they are to sustainably develop their fisheries and aquaculture sectors. If the member countries turn to the Commission for support, they will find a body with no permanent secretary, a diminishing staff and a declining budget. These challenges are not unique to APFIC, they are indicative of the contemporary nature of many international organisations¹. For this reason, SP6 encourages APFIC to reinvent itself.

The six foundation principles, six themes requiring attention and the six goals that will represent the APFIC targets over the next six years, have been constructed after consultation with both member countries and partner organisations operating in the region. The implementation of SP6 is ambitious with change, but feasible with outcomes. If it can be achieved, there is no reason why this APFIC exercise cannot be replicated in other regions of the world.

¹ See COFI/2014/inf.11 for a review of RFB - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mk346e.pdf>

1. INTRODUCING THE ASIA PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION (APFIC) AND “SP6”

1.1. A Unique Regional Fishery Body

Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) exist so that states and entities in a region can work cooperatively together within the region in order to ensure the long-term responsible and sustainable development of their shared fishery resources.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) currently liaises with over 50 RFBs which are united as members of the Regional Fishery Bodies Secretariats' Network (RSN) and FAO provides the services of a secretariat for the RSN.²

The RFBs comprising the RSN are a diverse group.³ Some are FAO bodies, others are non-FAO independent bodies; some are management bodies, others are advisory; some are species specific and others are geographic-area specific; and some focus on marine capture fisheries, others on inland fisheries and others on aquaculture.

In this diverse group of bodies, the Asia Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) is unique.

- It is a FAO Article XIV body, but the only one which does not have a management mandate;
- It is the only RFB to address all three subjects of marine capture fisheries and inland capture fisheries and aquaculture;
- It is neither species specific nor geographic-area specific as the Commission has a broad geographic mandate for “Asia and the Pacific” and it limits this vast region by attempting to address the fisheries food security challenges in its developing state member countries;
- Finally, it is the oldest of the FAO regional fishery bodies, but almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of a century after APFIC commenced, the Commission will ensure its ongoing relevance by adapting to the times.

² <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/en> (Accessed 28 April 2018)

³ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/en> (Accessed 28 April 2018)

APFIC's Purpose

The purpose of the Commission shall be to promote the full and proper utilization of living aquatic resources by the development and management of fishing and culture operations and by the development of related processing and marketing activities in conformity with the objectives of its Members, and to these ends it shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- (a) To keep under review the state of these resources and of the industries based on them;
- (b) To formulate and recommend measures and to initiate and carry out programmes or projects to:
 - (i) Increase the efficiency and sustainable productivity of fisheries and aquaculture;
 - (ii) Conserve and manage resources;
 - (iii) Protect resources from pollution;
- (c) To keep under review the economic and social aspects of fishing and aquaculture industries and recommend measures aimed at improving the living and working conditions of fishermen and other workers in these industries and otherwise at improving the contribution of each fishery to social and economic goals;
- (d) To promote programmes for mariculture and coastal fisheries enhancement;
- (e) To encourage, recommend, coordinate and, as appropriate, undertake training and extension activities in all aspects of fisheries;
- (f) To encourage, recommend, coordinate and undertake, as appropriate, research and development activities in all aspects of fisheries;
- (g) To assemble, publish or otherwise disseminate information regarding the living aquatic resources and fisheries based on these resources;
- (h) To carry out such other activities as may be necessary for the Commission to achieve its purpose as defined above.

(APFIC Agreement, Article IV)

More recent sessions have elaborated that APFIC will act as a Regional Consultative Forum that works in partnership with other regional organizations and arrangements and members. It provides advice, coordinates activities and acts as an information broker to increase knowledge of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia Pacific region to underpin decision making.

1.2. Introducing SP6

This document contains the Strategic Plan for the Asia Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) for the period 2018-2023. The document may be abbreviated to “SP6” because it is a Strategic Plan (SP) for six years, with six foundation principles, six priority subjects and six target goals.

In brief, the **six foundation principles** that underpin **HOW** APFIC will address the six themes and achieve its six target goals are:

1. ***APFIC will respond to the needs of its member countries;***
2. ***Cooperation and Collaboration among APFIC members, between the Commission and FAO HQ, and between the Commission and its partner organisations;***
3. ***Information and data to be transparent, based on best science and clearly communicated.***
4. ***Cost Effectiveness, Timeliness and Results;***
5. ***Compliance with soft and hard law instruments; and***
6. ***Commit to Blue Growth principles and SDG goals.***

This strategic plan supports the overall **Goal** of the Commission *to promote the full and proper utilization of living aquatic resources by the development and management of fishing and culture operations and by the development of related processing and marketing activities in conformity with the objectives of its Members* and **Purpose** of the Commission *to act as a Regional Consultative Forum that works in partnership with other regional organizations and arrangements and members; to provide advice, coordinate activities and act as an information broker to increase knowledge of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia Pacific region to underpin decision making.*

The **six operational goals** that are the focus of SP6 for APFIC’s marine capture fisheries, inland capture fisheries and aquaculture have been determined by listening to the priority concerns of the member countries and other regional partners. They are:

1. ***Improved and Renewed Collaborative Functioning of APFIC;***
2. ***Formalising regional partnerships;***
3. ***Improving fishery and aquaculture ecosystems and habitats, including addressing pollution, invasive species, fishing gear and climate change;***

- 4. *Supporting small scale fisheries and aquaculture and a human rights-based approach to fisheries development;***
- 5. *Combating IUU fishing and fisheries related crime; and***
- 6. *Improving fish food safety and fish trade.***

The SP6 is based on the premise that APFIC is currently at a watershed period in its long history. In 2018, the Commission has survived for 70 years by not being complacent, and by being sufficiently flexible to respond to the changing geo-political, social and environmental factors at play in the region. These qualities of resilience are now needed more than ever before.

1.3. The structure of SP6

This document is divided into six parts:

- **Part I** has introduced the Commission and outlined the broad principles and structure of SP6.
- **Part II** looks to the current state of the Asia Pacific Fishery Commission.
- **Part III** will examine the previous APFIC Strategic Plan 2012-2018, including the performance of the Commission in addressing the strategies outlined in that Plan as evaluated by APFIC itself, and the APFIC member countries and partners.
- **Part IV** examines feedback from the APFIC members regarding their current fishery needs and priorities and the guidance that they are seeking from the Commission as it enters a new strategic plan period.
- **Part V** builds on all the earlier material to describe SP6 - the new APFIC Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2023: six years, six guiding principles, six subjects and six goals.
- **Part VI** concludes the report.
- There are three Appendices providing the questionnaires and survey responses on priority actions.

2. THE ASIA PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION IN 2018

2.1. The Current Members of APFIC

The current members of APFIC are: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America and Viet Nam.⁴

Focal points from all APFIC Member Countries were contacted and requested to contribute to this Strategic Plan, however only thirteen of the twenty-one members provided feedback. There was a noticeable absence of feedback from most developed state members.⁵

2.2. The Partners of APFIC

The broad scope of APFIC's geographic mandate for "Asia and the Pacific" means that APFIC is just one of many intergovernmental organizations (including RFBs) within a vast area that potentially extends from the western Indian Ocean to the eastern Pacific Ocean, north to the Arctic Ocean and south to the Southern Ocean. Furthermore, the landmass of Asia extends to at least 47 countries with more than 60 per cent of the world's population. This same region produces more than 90% of global aquaculture, more than 50% of global marine capture fisheries, and more than 75% of global inland capture fisheries.

The RSN lists 19 RFBs (with varying mandates for geographic area, species and management / advisory status) operating in this vast region⁶, and this is not including the UN Environment East Asian seas and other specific fishery organisations and fishery-related organisations.⁷ Finally, the FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific (SAP) which is based in Samoa also provides fishery guidance for the Pacific region.

Under the APFIC Agreement, the Commission is charged with the task of identifying the information needs relating to fisheries and aquaculture in its member countries and within its broad geographic area of competence. APFIC does this by acting as a Regional Consultative Forum through which it convenes member countries and partner organisations

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/apfic/background/about-asia-pacific-fishery-commission/membership/en/> (Accessed 28 April 2018) Membership of APFIC is open to Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO that accept the Agreement. Other States that are Members of the UN, any of its Specialized Agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency may be admitted as members by a two-thirds majority of the Commission's membership.

⁵ In the interests of transparency, the states which responded to the APFIC questionnaire member were: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

⁶ In addition to APFIC, the Asia Pacific RFBs are: BOBP-IGO, CacFish, CCAMLR, CCSBT, FFA, IOTC, NACA, NPAFC, NPFC, MRC, PICES, RECOFI, SEAFDEC, SIOFA, SPC, SPRFMO, WCPFC (plus the IWC and ACAP).

⁷ ASEAN Fisheries Working Group, INFOFISH, WorldFish, COBSEA, PEMSEA, CTI-CFF, and ICSF.

to identify emerging issues in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and to prioritise the actions needed to address them. APFIC aims for its regional projects and activities to be compatible not competitive with the work being done by its Partner organisations.

2.3. The APFIC Secretariat

APFIC currently has no Secretary, instead it has an Interim-Secretary whose Terms of Reference do not include the duties of a FAO RFB Secretary. For this reason, APFIC can only be loosely described as having a “Secretariat”. The small number of APFIC staff (including the interim-secretary) are located in Bangkok at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP). Their primary role is to bring FAO closer to the region, and the needs of the region back to FAO. In particular, APFIC considers it important to provide a forum where Asia’s smaller states have a voice in the international and regional arena. This goal is achieved by APFIC staff monitoring the fishery needs of the region and then providing technical support for capacity-development workshops and meetings convened by the Commission. The APFIC staff additionally provide an important liaison role with the other fisheries professionals who are based at FAO headquarters.

It is indicative of the current economic environment that most international organisations and national government departments are constantly required to do more work with a diminishing staff and finance base. Yet the contribution of Asian fisheries to the global market continues to increase and the fisheries related needs of the Asia Pacific region continue to diversify and escalate. It is, therefore, more imperative than ever before that partners in the region cooperate and collaborate for the sustainable development of fisheries. This is precisely the requirement of UN Sustainable Development Goal 17.⁸

2.4. The FAO Strategic Framework and the APFIC Budget

APFIC is an FAO body and its budget is therefore directly impacted by FAO funding under the FAO Strategic Framework.⁹ The FAO budget is currently supported by both Assessed Contributions (40%) and Voluntary Contributions (60%). Member country Assessed Contributions comprise the FAO regular budget which is set at the biennial FAO Conference. In the 2018-19 period this amount is set at USD1,005.6 million. The Voluntary Contributions provided by Members and other partners support FAO’s technical and emergency assistance to governments for clearly defined purposes. These are expected to reach USD1,6 billion in 2018-19.¹⁰

⁸ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ms431reve.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.fao.org/about/strategic-planning/en/>

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All funds are accountable through results-based management.¹¹ Budgets are also published on the FAO website.

APFIC has never had its own budget. Instead, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) have traditionally received a budget allocation from the FAO regular program budget. In recent years, this has been combined with income contributions per biennium from backstopping projects and about 80% of this has been used for APFIC activities. However, since 2017 there has been no regular program budget allocation and all current APFIC activities are currently supported by income from backstopping and some professional post savings from a vacant Senior Fishery Officer position, that of the former APFIC Secretary.

APFIC also receives limited in-kind support from the respective governments which are hosting the APFIC meetings (i.e. APFIC Session, APFIC Executive Committee and APFIC Regional Consultative Forum Meetings (RCFM)), as well as a few developed state countries which are participating in the RCFM, plus contributions from some APFIC partners and some FAO ad-hoc funding which supports the RCFM.

Clearly there is an urgent need for APFIC to explore other potential funding mechanisms with Member countries and partners and for this reason more than any other, this strategic plan aims to consult more broadly with the APFIC members and partners in order to find out what the region most needs and how it can best be provided.

¹¹ <http://www.fao.org/about/strategic-planning/rbm/en/>

3. THE (LAST) APFIC STRATEGIC PLAN 2012 – 2018

3.1. Content of the Previous Plan

Document APFIC/12/INF-12 E provides the meeting report from the thirty-second Session of APFIC which was held in Da Nang, Viet Nam from 20-22 September 2012. The report contains the APFIC Strategic Plan 2012-2018. The contents of the report include the standard background information on APFIC plus new areas which were intended to respond to the changing needs of the member states and partners. These additional sections included:

- The APFIC website;
- Monitoring of status and trends in fisheries and aquaculture;
- A focus on marine capture fisheries by areas – the China Sea and East Asian Seas, Sulu-Celebes (Sulawesi) Sea, Arafura-Timor Sea and the Natuna Sea;
- Inland fisheries;
- Aquaculture; and
- Improved coordination with other regional organizations (IGOs and NGOs).

3.2. APFIC's review of its own Performance

In the period 2012-2018 APFIC has enabled its member countries to enjoy more direct support from the regional office. Secretariat staff have attended the technical meetings of a wide range of partner organisations. Their contributions at these meetings have included providing *ad hoc* advice and commentary on work-plans, projects and technical workshops.

The Commission has also been successful in getting largely unspoken issues, (such as trash fish) into the public discussion. It has also provided an ongoing regional contribution to understanding and addressing global fishery problems including IUU fishing, application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture, sustainable inland fisheries, aquaculture developments, fisheries catch certification and climate change.

3.2.1 The APFIC Website

In 2015-16 the APFIC website was given a major overhaul. The work was done by secretariat staff collaborating with FAO Information / Communications to reconstruct the site which now conforms with FAO standards. The new website was completed in 2016. It is a practical and user-friendly site, but to be truly reflective of developments within an organisation, a website needs to be constantly monitored and updated and APFIC do not currently have the staff or expertise to engage in this task.

3.2.2 Monitoring of Status and Trends in APFIC Fisheries and Aquaculture¹²

There is a constantly growing demand for fish as food both globally and within the APFIC region, but due primarily to overfishing (including IUU fishing), capture fisheries have not grown to meet this demand. In fact at best, capture fisheries have remained static, at worst they are declining. Accordingly, it is aquaculture that has been primarily responsible for the growth of fish for human consumption. China has played a major role in this growth as it represents more than sixty percent of world aquaculture production. It is noteworthy that the top five aquaculture fish producing states in the world contain four countries from the APFIC region: China, India, Viet Nam, and Bangladesh. Eighteen million people around the world are engaged in some form of fish farming and 94% of these are in Asia.

On marine capture fisheries, six of the ten major global producers are APFIC member states: China, Indonesia, Japan, India, Viet Nam and Myanmar. Global trends are warning of diminishing stocks with nearly a third of all marine capture fish stocks being harvested at biologically unsustainable levels.

On inland capture fisheries production, world catches are greater than 11 million tonnes and the bulk of this global production is in 16 countries, 9 of which are APFIC members: China, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Finally, the total number of fishing vessels in the world in 2014 was estimated at about 4.6 million, and 3.5 million of these vessels were in Asia.

It is clear that APFIC member countries are major players in global fisheries production and their burgeoning activity reinforces the need for the regional presence of FAO through the Commission.

3.2.3 Marine Capture Fisheries

APFIC has played an important role in explaining the regional nuances of international fisheries instruments and other environmental instruments that impact on fisheries. These include the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (Revised Edition) (PSMA) including PSMA training for port side inspections;¹³ and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines).¹⁴

¹² The data in this section is based on APFIC and FAO data as published in the FAO 2016 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5555e.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5469t.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/guidelines/en>

The Commission has also developed regional training courses on best practices on tropical trawling and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management. This latter course was developed in collaboration with other regional and international partners including the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME), the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), South East Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), and IMA International¹⁵.

A methodology for characterising types and drivers of IUU fishing has been developed and a draft regional review of IUU fishing by foreign owned or operated fishing vessels in the Asian region has been prepared. The subject of IUU fishing remains critical in the region where several states have received European Union Yellow or Red Cards.¹⁶

A matter of concern to many regional NGOs is the ongoing use of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) and artificial reefs. The Commission prepared and circulated a questionnaire to monitor this issue, but response rates were low and could not provide a valid statistical analysis.

3.2.4 Inland Capture Fisheries

Inland waters in the APFIC area are generally under the managerial responsibility of a single sovereign country, a notable exception being the Mekong River which is dealt with by the Mekong River Commission (MRC).¹⁷ APFIC has an important role in the region to promote the most relevant international instrument which is the Rome Declaration on Responsible Inland Fisheries: Ten Steps to Responsible Inland Fisheries.¹⁸

APFICs work that has been conducted on inland fisheries includes the convening of a Regional Consultation for “Improving the contribution of culture-based fisheries and related fishery enhancements in inland waters to blue growth.”

Another FAO project “Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Inland Fisheries Practices in Freshwater Ecosystems of High Conservation Value (IFish)” addressed the protection of freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity in Indonesia in order to enhance food security for local people dependent on inland fisheries for their livelihoods.

¹⁵ For a complete list, see www.eafmlearn.org

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/question-and-answers-eus-fight-against-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-iuu-fishing-5_ro

¹⁷ <http://www.mrcmekong.org/>

¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5735e.pdf>

Under FAO's Blue Growth initiative (BGI)¹⁹, FAO and APFIC's focus has been investigating the potential to increase the productivity of inland waters. This can be achieved through enhancement, habitat manipulation and stocking, and APFIC has provided guidelines and advice on the stocking of inland water bodies. The aim is not so much to increase inland fisheries productivity as it is to secure sustainability for both food security and the economic benefits that inland fisheries will generate.

3.2.5 Aquaculture

In the field of aquaculture there are few global instruments of direct relevance to sustainability and best practice with the obvious exception being the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Here, the four sub-provisions in Article 9 deal exclusively with aquaculture development.²⁰ Apart from these provisions in the Code, the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture has outlined a number of initiatives to be promoted and APFIC has been working with member countries to promote:

- Improving the information, zonation and regulatory frameworks for sustainable aquaculture;
- Strengthening the use of assessment tools for aquaculture management;
- Promoting better management practices in aquaculture and aquaculture certification; and
- Improving understanding of the viability of aquaculture feeds for marine fish culture.

The Blue Growth perspective on aquaculture is that it provides an important method for meeting Asia's increasing seafood demand. However, FAO notes that it requires both improved efficiency of production as well as an expansion of production areas. FAO has also noted that aquaculture needs a strengthened regulatory framework which will promote innovations in culture systems and technology that will encourage higher productivity but can reduce the environmental footprint. During the 2012-2018 period APFIC and the member countries have taken steps to develop a strategic plan for supporting the sustainable intensification of aquaculture in the region. The matter has been taken up as a major theme under the biennial programme of work of the Commission and outcomes include the development of a planning toolkit to be piloted under a FAO Regional Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

¹⁹ (FAO) <http://www.fao.org/policy-support/policy-themes/blue-growth/en/> and (APFIC) <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/perspectives/blue-growth/en/>

²⁰ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/v9878e/v9878e00.htm>

3.3. Member Country reviews of the APFIC Performance

In March 2018, APFIC member countries were distributed with a questionnaire that would aid in developing the new APFIC strategic plan.²¹ The circulated member country questionnaire included a tabled question which requested member country feedback on APFICs performance in addressing the last strategic plan.

Looking back to the APFIC strategic plan 2012-2018 (EXCO/17/INF/4-b), an aim in this previous strategy was to respond to the changing needs of member countries and partners. Accordingly, that plan included new and additional activities and subjects. Please rate the performance of the APFIC Secretariat over the past six years with regard to the following issues:

Activity	Poor	Fair	Good
Overall performance of the Commission			
Communications and updating of the APFIC website			
Our monitoring of status and trends in fisheries and aquaculture			
Our focus on marine capture fisheries by areas: China Sea, East Asian Sea, Sulawesi Sea, Arafura-Timor Sea, Natuna Sea			
Developing sustainable aquaculture			
How well have we addressed the regional outcomes listed in Annex One of the last strategy?			
Is the Secretariat communicating well? Would you prefer us to use social media such as Twitter?			

On the first section dealing with the overall performance of the Commission, one country abstained from comment due to lack of experience on which to base a judgement, five countries rated APFIC’s performance as “Fair” and seven countries rated the performance as “Good”. This data should be interpreted as mostly favourable to the Commission.

The second review question dealt with the changes implemented on the APFIC website and again this section repeated the same good results as for question one: one abstention, five ratings of “Fair” and seven ratings of “Good”. The website changes are described above in paragraph 2.2.1. It has been noted that the final website product is clear and user-friendly but reduced secretariat staffing makes it difficult to constantly monitor and upgrade the facility.

The third review question dealt with APFICs monitoring of the status and trends in fisheries. As this is a core function of the Commission, the results were again reasonably positive: one

²¹ See Appendix 1

abstention, six “Fair” and six “Good”. The leading global publication on the status and trends in all world fisheries is the FAO State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) which is produced every two years for the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). It was last produced in 2016 and a new edition is currently in press for COFI 33 in 2018. APFIC contributes regional data to this report reflecting the primary role that APFIC member countries play in monitoring the global status and trends of world fisheries.

The fourth question dealt with how well APFIC has undertaken work programmes for marine capture fisheries by an “area” based approach. The questionnaire identifies 5 areas: China Sea, East Asian Sea, Sulawesi Sea, Arafura-Timor Sea and the Natuna Sea. This question produced diverse results: there were two abstentions, two ratings of “Poor”, six ratings of “Fair” and three ratings of “Good”. The range of responses makes it difficult to draw conclusions and the subject needs to be given further member country discussion. It would be ideal to understand exactly what actions were perceived as being “Good” and what omissions were perceived as being “Poor”. There also needs to be further APFIC / member country discussion on how an area-based approach can best be done whilst bearing in mind the diminishing APFIC budget and staff. If an area-based approach to fisheries is desirable, it may be necessary for APFIC to work with partner organisations in order to provide the service that member countries are seeking.

The fifth question requested feedback on APFIC’s role in developing sustainable aquaculture and the question received positive feedback. One country abstained, five countries rated APFIC’s aquaculture performance as “Fair” and seven rated it as “Good”. The sixth question sought feedback on APFIC’s performance on the whole of Annex One in the last Strategic Plan.²² However, as with question four above, the results were so diverse that it is impossible to interpret the data without further information. Thus, two states abstained, one rated APFIC’s performance as “Poor”, seven rated it “Fair” and three rated it “Good”. Regardless of how well APFIC may or may not have addressed the items in Annex One, it is submitted that this is now only of historical interest. The 2012-2018 Strategic Plan is finished and the Commission is preparing to embark on a new Strategic Plan period. The priorities of the new plan have been constructed by consultation with both member countries and partners and they reflect the current status and trends, not the 2012 status and trends. It is more important for the region to move forward, than to catch-up on the past.

²² Subjects in Annex One included IUU fishing, fishing over-capacity, improving livelihoods of fishing and aquaculture communities, strengthening governance of fisheries, capacity building, integrating fisheries and aquaculture into other sectoral planning, climate change impacts, strengthening EAF and EAA, management decision-making, certification of fisheries and aquaculture and strengthening fisheries management.

The final question dealt with the APFIC secretariat, specifically how well it is communicating with member countries. There was a further question attached to this tabled question on whether members would prefer APFIC to communicate through social media. There were no specific comments regarding the use of social media. APFIC's scores for communicating were one abstention, two ratings of "Poor", six ratings of "Fair" and four ratings of "Good".

These ratings are interesting and there is some overlap with the second questionnaire that was circulated amongst APFIC Partner organisations including other RFBs, the UNEP Asian Seas and NGOs. Some "Partner" organisations commented that they had never heard of APFIC and had to google the website to learn about the work of the Commission. One abstaining member country noted on their questionnaire, "We have not been in close communication with APFIC for the past few years, and do not have strong opinions on [its performance in the last strategic plan]."

It is evident that APFIC needs to be more proactive in reaching-out and publicising the work that it does. This could possibly be done by more regularly updating the APFIC website, and FAO HQ could support this activity. It is also important to remember that communication is a two-way street. It requires a sender (or speaker) and a receiver (listener) to both contribute to the discussion, and this "dialogue" is frequently lacking. For example, all twenty-one APFIC member countries were asked to respond to this questionnaire but eight-member countries did not engage in the receiving (listening) process. If member country feedback cannot be contributed for something as major as a future strategic plan, there is little hope that feedback will be given for regular monthly news updates.

If member countries want APFIC to communicate more or better, the Commission needs to be clear about what they are to communicate. That is, what information is of interest to members and are the members prepared to contribute to the discussion process.

3.4. Partner Organisation Comments on APFIC's past performance

Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with an active interest in the APFIC geographic region were contacted with their own questionnaire and a request that they contribute to the APFIC Strategic Plan.²³

²³ See Appendix Two

The organisations who have contributed feedback are the Bay of Bengal Intergovernmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO), the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), the Intergovernmental Organization for Marketing Information and Technical Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Asia and Pacific Region (INFOFISH), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Network of Aquaculture Centres Asia (NACA), Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), the South East Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), and the Secretariat for the Pacific Community – Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (SPC).²⁴

Within the Partner questionnaire, questions 1-3 focused on the past performance of APFIC:

1. How effective has APFIC been in the past five years in supporting its members to achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development?

Not effective	Of limited effectiveness	Effective	Very Effective

2. How relevant have APFIC’s past activities been to the work being conducted by your organisation?

Not relevant	Of limited Relevance	Relevant	Very Relevant

3. Over the past five years has your organisation interacted / coordinated / collaborated with, or used information from, APFIC?

Not at all	On limited occasions	Often	Very Often

On question one, the effectiveness of the Commission in supporting the APFIC members to achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development, the results were four abstentions, three ratings of “limited effectiveness”, two ratings of “Effective” and one rating of “Very Effective”. The highest praise was given by an aquaculture body which clearly reflects one of the strengths of APFIC. The remaining comments were varied between the

²⁴ An additional four partners were contacted but did not reply to the questionnaire: Committee for the Conservation on Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), the Regional Plan of Action – IUU Fishing (RPOA-IUU), and the WorldFish Center (WFC). CCAMLR did reply to say that they were unable to complete the questionnaire as they had no contact with APFIC and no views on the Commission. The IOTC made a similar comment but they did address part 4 of the questionnaire by including a list of their own current and future priorities for the Indian Ocean region.

regions and mandates of each organisation so that it is difficult to form conclusions. One interpretation that is suggestive is that four out of ten partners see no relevance or application of APFICs work, to their own regional work. This would support the above finding that APFIC needs to reach out more, and to more actively promote the work that they do.

On question two, how relevant APFICs work has been to the activities being done by the partner organisations, the scores were one rating of “not applicable”, one rating of “not relevant”, two ratings of “limited relevance”, four ratings of “relevant” and two ratings of “very relevant”. It is clear that the score for “relevance” related most closely to distance. That is, the closer the partner was to South Asia or South East Asia, the more relevant was APFICs work.

Question three dealt with the organisational interaction between APFIC and the partner organisations. Two (geographically distant) partners responded that there was “No interaction at all”. Clearly APFIC needs to develop better linkages with both organisations. Five partners responded “on limited occasions”. The remaining partners scored the question at one rating for “Often” and two ratings for “Very Often”. Again, these higher scores reflect the valued contribution of APFIC to fisheries and aquaculture development in South East Asia and South Asia.

3.5. Summary of the APFIC Performance in the last Strategic Plan

A few points need to be noted in any summary of APFICs performance 2012-2018.

First, as the above discussion has shown, the 2012 work plan was ambitious.

Second, as noted above in sections 2.3 and 2.4 both the APFIC Secretariat and its budget have been diminishing during the period of the last strategic plan.

Third, for these reasons, the work that has been done by the Commission, as described above in sections 3.2.1 - 3.2.5 is impressive. It is important to focus on the actions done, and not the omissions.

Fourth, it is clear that developing states in South-east Asia and South Asia have been the primary beneficiaries of APFICs work, but this does not mean that there is no role within the Commission for the developed state member countries. In the future, cooperation amongst APFIC members will necessitate greater involvement from the developed state member countries. These countries can offer the developing state members the benefit of their extensive expertise in the legal, scientific, social and economic aspects of fisheries capacity-

development. Indeed, such engagement would usually be a matter of policy coherence for the developed state member countries who are aid donors in the region. It must be recalled that the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention and subsequent international fishery instruments enshrine “cooperation” as a partnership among countries. This partnership is not merely restricted to being members of a Commission, but to an active and ongoing engagement among all member countries.

Finally, greater cooperation is also needed between APFIC and its IGO / NGO partners, and a new approach to partnerships is a core principle of SP6. Collaboration with partner organisations is recognised in UN Sustainable Development Goal 17 which provides that the other 16 SDGs can only be addressed if countries and organisations work together.

4. BACKGROUND TO THE APFIC STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2023

4.1. Fisheries Priorities in APFIC Member Countries

When questioned on their current fishing priorities, the responding member countries mainly identified universal or generic fishery issues. Apart from an emphasis on aquaculture, most of the priority subjects were matters that could occur in almost any region of the world.

The two highest priorities are how to implement sustainable aquaculture development and how to implement sustainable fisheries management practices.

The next two priority subjects mainly relate to the legal or regulatory regime and concern how to deal with IUU fishing and how to implement monitoring, control and surveillance in fisheries and aquaculture (including observer programmes). Continuing with the legal theme, but on a lesser rated priority, some members expressed concern on how to update their national fisheries and / or aquaculture legislation or regulations.

After the legal and regulatory requirements, the next four priority subjects related to the need for more science, more data and more technical expertise. Thus, the member countries need assistance with the collection of, accuracy of, and gaps in their fisheries related data. They also need to strengthen their fisheries and aquaculture scientific advice. They are specifically seeking assistance on how best to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries. Finally, they are endeavouring to maintain the health and diversity of their various fishery and or aquaculture ecosystems.

Of particular interest were the responses given by six members who identified priority areas that were not listed in the questionnaire pro forma, and these matters were more locally specific than the listed items. Cambodia is working on the demarcation of conservation areas (state conservation areas, community fisheries areas (CFi), community fish refuges (CFR) and flooded forests). Myanmar is working on the implementation of good aquaculture practices and aquaculture certification. Sri Lanka is working to achieve the elimination of post-harvest losses. Thailand is prioritising capacity building for laboratories connected to food safety. Timor-Leste has requested assistance to conduct a survey of the country's fisheries potential, and a fisheries stock assessment so that the government has a strong foundation for planning the sustainable use of their fishery resources. Viet Nam is prioritising the re-organisation of their fisheries sector towards sustainable development and increasing the value-added component of aquaculture and fisheries products.

4.2. Fisheries and Fisheries-related law and policy instruments

The questionnaire also sought member country feedback on recent global soft and hard law initiatives and whether APFIC could assist with understanding the fishery-related impacts of, or, member country compliance with, certain instruments. The results were surprising considering the history of workshops that have already been conducted in the region, and the newness of more recent instruments. Thus, members are seeking most help with the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSM)²⁵, which is closely followed by a request for assistance in understanding and applying the Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF).²⁶ There is also widespread uncertainty about the domestic implications of the new UNCLOS Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)²⁷. Finally, the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes,²⁸ and the UN Sustainable Development Goals²⁹ also require further education, explanation and application in the member states.

4.3. Future Directions for APFIC: From Member Countries and Partners

Both the Member Country Questionnaire and the Partner Questionnaire concluded with open questions providing the respondents with an opportunity to comment on the future directions of APFIC. The comments are all valuable and have been elaborated in Appendix 3, but a synthesis of the comments is provided below.

4.3.1. Member countries

The five most common member country requests for the future directions of APFIC are:

- More collaborative work to be done on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture including guidelines / training / capacity development on how these are best achieved;
- Addressing IUU fishing and its full ramifications including unsustainable fishing gear, human trafficking, worker exploitation / slavery, the smuggling of goods, drugs and wildlife (including endangered species), and the need for more regional training on Port State Measures;
- Helping countries to improve the fisheries value chain particularly through fish trade;
- Aquaculture food safety particularly antimicrobial resistance and facilitating improved strains of emerging species;

²⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5469t.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/guidelines/en>

²⁷ <http://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom.htm>

²⁸ <http://www.fao.org/fi/static-media/MeetingDocuments/CDS/TC2016/wpAnnex.pdf>

²⁹ <https://oceanconference.un.org/>

- Maintenance of, and more data in, the APFIC website including a shared regional database that monitors the fisheries and aquaculture developments in member countries.

4.3.2. Partner Organisations

Several of the member country suggestions for the future work-plan of APFIC overlapped with the feedback received from APFIC partner organisations. Examples include the need to promote EAF and EAA, for more attention to be given to regional IUU fishing particularly the small-scale fleet such as “the blue boats”, and a greater regional focus on fisheries trade.

However, other Partner organisation suggestions for the future of APFIC broke new ground and encouragingly the most common suggestion of all was for APFIC to collaborate more with other regional organisations. The collaboration could take several forms: increased visits, increased virtual conferences, publication of a regional newsletter, pooling of resources and expertise to enable a larger out-reach of programmes, more engagement with regional aquaculture centres on other continents particularly Europe, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, and more engagement with the Fisheries Crime work being done by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

In November 2017 a joint UNEP / FAO meeting was held in Cape Town, South Africa and specifically raised the long overdue subject of the need to build “international partnerships” in order to enhance science-based ecosystem approaches in support of regional ocean governance.³⁰ This need is particularly evident in the UN inter-agency work. There is much administration and duplication that could be reduced if FAO RFBs and UNEP regional seas were to better collaborate with their regional efforts. It was, therefore particularly encouraging to see one of the UN Environment East Asian Sea bodies suggest the possibility of a formal partnership agreement with APFIC.

There were also a further four subjects that were given repeated emphasis in the Partner organisation feedback, but only minimal attention, or no attention at all in the member country feedback. These were:

- The fishery impacts of climate change;
- Marine litter from fisheries and aquaculture;
- Application of the small-scale fishery guidelines, especially its human rights- based approach to fisheries and aquaculture development; and

³⁰ Other collaborative partners included GEF LME, UNDP, UNESCO and IOC.

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- Improving the working conditions of, and safety of fishers and fish-workers, including migrant workers and women.

5. THE APFIC STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2023: SIX YEARS, SIX PRINCIPLES, SIX THEMES AND SIX GOALS

The implementation of SP6 is to be guided by six foundation principles which will underpin the Commission's approach to achieving its target goals. These principles will also form the basis of the informal contractual relationship between FAO and the Commission, the members of the Commission and the Commission and its partner organisations.

5.1. The Six Principles

5.1.1 APFIC will respond to the needs of its member countries

The vast Asia Pacific geographic area of APFIC is most effectively made manageable by having APFIC prioritise its work in accordance with the fishery needs of its developing state member countries. These needs must be monitored at least annually. Where the Commission or FAO is unable to meet the developing state needs, the Commission must liaise with developed state member countries and /or partner organisations to determine how assistance can best be provided.

5.1.2 Cooperation and collaboration among APFIC Members, between the Commission and FAO HQ, and between the Commission and its Partner Organisations

APFIC has diminishing resources and it can only effectively address the fishery needs of its member countries by cooperating and collaborating with other entities. These include the professional staff at FAO HQ, the developed state member countries within the Commission, and the numerous intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations which are operating in the APFIC region.

Collaboration may be informal and ad hoc, but many partner organisations have recommended a more formal relationship based on Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or contractual arrangements. In particular, administration and duplication between UN agencies is not cost effective and APFIC should look to formal collaborative arrangements with other UN agencies. For example, UN Environment should be consulted for the COBSEA and PEMSEA work on ecosystem health and marine pollution. Similarly, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime should be consulted for measures to address fisheries related crimes.

The results on the questionnaire have also demonstrated that there needs to be increased communication and cooperation between FAO RFBs especially when they share many of the same member countries, oceans and sub-regions.

Finally, it has to be noted that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17 acknowledges the importance of making partnerships to achieve the sixteen earlier SDGs. Thus, goal 17 is stating that countries, organisations and stakeholders need to cooperate and not compete.

5.1.3 Information and data to be transparent, based on best science, and clearly communicated

In the interests of combating corruption, mismanagement, uncertainty and erroneous advice, it is important that the collection, analysis and dissemination of information by APFIC is transparent, based on the best available science, and clearly communicated. This is not always entirely possible due to confidentiality requirements. However, member countries and cooperating organisations are encouraged to embrace a mindset of openness and sharing to the extent that they are most able to do so. Improved communication is most effectively done, and seen to be done, through updates on the APFIC website.

5.1.4 Cost effectiveness, timeliness and results

The international community of states and organisations are increasingly focused on performance, timeliness, cost effectiveness and results. FAO and APFIC are no exceptions. It is a foundation principle of this document that APFIC projects and decisions will be best practice, cost effective, timely and results driven.

5.1.5 Compliance with soft and hard law instruments

In recent years, the regime for marine capture fisheries has seen a number of new international fishery instruments and fisheries-related instruments. Several of these have been initiatives of FAO, but others have been directly pursued by the United Nations. The APFIC developing member states are seeking guidance from the Commission on how they can best comply with these instruments.

Inland fisheries and aquaculture are less internationally regulated, but APFIC member countries are seeking advice on how these subjects might be better addressed at the national level in order to ensure the sustainable development of safe seafood.

The Commission will work with its member countries to ensure their compliance with the soft and hard law fisheries instruments.

5.1.6 Commit to Blue growth principles

FAO's Blue Growth initiative (BGI) is an integrated approach across multiple goals that addresses all dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. The responsible management of marine, coastal and inland water ecosystems, including habitats and living resources, is imperative

for ensuring sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. BGI also embraces the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, the capacity development of all fish workers, and decent working conditions along the entire fish value chain.

5.2. The Six Themes

The six priority themes to be the focus of this six-year plan have been determined after a comparative analysis of feedback received from the APFIC developing member countries and partner organisations.

5.2.1 Fishery and aquaculture ecosystems and habitats, including pollution, invasive species, fishing gear and climate change

Healthy and productive ecosystems for marine capture, inland capture and aquaculture fisheries are important requirements to facilitate blue growth. The member countries have noted that fisheries and other anthropogenic-driven phenomena including climate change, the spread of invasive species and pollution can have a damaging impact on ecosystems, and they are seeking guidance from APFIC on how best to rectify or minimise the damaging effects. Ecosystem based management (EBM) is gaining momentum as a method of aiding spatial planning and addressing long term sustainability issues in all aquatic ecosystems.

Bottom trawling, bycatch and discards, the use of cyanide and explosives, ghost fishing, and fish aggregating devices have all been criticized as unsustainable fishing practices. They are known to destroy ecosystems, biodiversity and human lives. Yet such fishing practices are widely employed within the APFIC region by IUU industrial fishing fleets down to small scale artisanal fishers. In contrast, responsible fishing techniques, such as pole and line fishing need more research on their potential application for the region. Both APFIC member countries and partner organisations are interested to learn more on the social, economic and environmental costs of using sustainable and unsustainable fishing techniques.

5.2.2 Small scale fisheries and a human rights-based approach to fisheries development

Small scale fisheries and aquaculture play an important role in APFIC developing member countries as they provide both income and food security, particularly in coastal and riparian communities. Most APFIC member countries and partners are seeking greater implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. (SSF Guidelines) in a manner that is specifically tailored to the needs of south Asia and south-east Asia. In particular, APFIC members have applauded the human rights focus of the SSF in a region where workers' rights are lacking, migrant workers and female workers are often exploited, and working conditions are frequently unsafe.

5.2.3 IUU fishing and fisheries-related crime

Almost all of the foundation principles underpinning SP6 are threatened by the ongoing presence of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU fishing). APFIC member country feedback has noted that this is still a significant problem in the APFIC region, and several members have experienced European Union yellow and red cards.

Weak legal and governance frameworks, together with ephemeral political will have been major impediments to tackling IUU fishing in the past, but in recent years a new regional determination to deal with the problem is evident. FAO believes that the greatest possibility of successfully defeating or minimising IUU fishing lies with the implementation of internationally agreed instruments and the strengthening of Monitoring Control and Surveillance. APFIC member countries have expressed a need for guidance from the Commission on how best to comply with the international legal regime. One of the member countries has additionally noted with concern the link between IUU fishing and unsustainable fishing gear, human trafficking, modern slavery, and the smuggling of goods, including drugs and endangered wildlife.

5.2.4 Fish food safety, fish trade and the fisheries and aquaculture value chains

Fish and fishery products represent one of the most traded commodities of the global food sector and their trade has been expanding due to growth in fisheries production and an increasing demand for fish as food. Several APFIC members are concerned that they are not beneficiaries of the burgeoning fish trade sector. Members are particularly seeking guidance in developing the value chain of farmed fish from the implementation of standards at the farm and processing level, to producing a product based on consumer needs and finally how to make this product available and competitive in the market. The fishing and aquaculture industries in APFIC member countries must ensure that the systems in place for fish production, handling, processing and transportation meet requisite standards of safety. Member countries are seeking capacity building for the training of staff, the establishment of facilities, and the improvement of their procedures in order to ensure the safety of their fish as food. Ensuring high standards for quality and safety is good economics: it minimizes losses that result from spoilage, it expands fishery markets and it reduces illness among consumers.

5.2.5 Regional partnerships

The foundation principles of SP6 reinforce the idea that APFIC can only address the extensive needs of its member countries if it acts in a cooperative and collaborative manner with its regional partner organisations. APFIC no longer has the resources to act on its own.

Collaboration between organisations may be informal and ad hoc, but many partner organisations have recommended a more formal relationship based on Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or contractual arrangements. In particular, administration and duplication between UN agencies is not cost effective and APFIC should look to formal collaborative arrangements with other UN agencies. Such partnerships are both policy-driven by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, but they are also needs-driven by the diminishing position of APFIC. The results from the questionnaire have also demonstrated that there needs to be increased communication and cooperation between FAO RFBs, particularly when they share many of the same member countries, sub-regions, oceans and goals such as increased training on Port State Measures.

5.2.6 Improved and Renewed Collaborative Functioning of APFIC

APFIC is seventy years old, but it is not a relic. The Commission plays an ongoing important role giving fisheries and aquaculture advice and support to the numerous developing states in the region. It should be remembered that the region has more than 60% of the world's population and is the biggest regional provider of fish. APFIC provides its service with the assistance of its developed state member countries and through liaison with the professional staff at FAO HQ. SP6 has further recommended more formal links with other regional fisheries partners. If these relationships are to be effective, they will require a level of dedication from all parties involved with the Commission, and the Commission itself. A core theme of SP6 is that all parties should reconsider and renew their commitment to the Commission and the Region.

5.3. The Six Goals

The following six operational goals are the target actions of SP6 and constitute APFIC's work plan for the region over the next six years.

If the required expertise does not exist within any of these states or organisations, then cost-effective consultancy advice must be procured on an ad hoc basis. If other partner countries or organisations will reap an intellectual or practical benefit from such consultant reports, then the costs of hiring the consultant should be shared. APFIC may accordingly reinvent itself as the fisheries and aquaculture knowledge broker for the region.

5.3.1 Improved and Renewed Collaborative functioning of APFIC

- To better communicate its projects and findings within the region, the APFIC website will be expanded. The website should contain a (locked) table which monitors fisheries and aquaculture developments in the member countries – and includes provision for shared experiences and lessons learned between members.

- APFIC projects and activities in the region to be communicated through the improved website.
- Improved communication, and a record of shared experiences must also extend to APFIC partner organisations, including other FAO RFBs which share similar member countries, oceans and sub-regions.
- Improved communication must also occur within member countries so that the stakeholders themselves are educated to understand the consequences of their actions.

APFIC to consolidate this knowledge and provide capacity building workshops where they are most needed.

- All APFIC member countries and the FAO are required to renew their commitment and ongoing participation with APFIC, this Strategic Plan, and the region that contains more than 60% of the world's population, and the fishery and aquaculture industries that produce more fish than any other region of the world.
- In the face of financial and staffing constraints within the APFIC Secretariat, and low participation of Member countries in APFIC Sessions, Member countries will attempt to:
 - Engage high-level participation in the APFIC consultative fora;
 - Make Voluntary contributions to support the APFIC Secretariat;
 - Co-finance APFIC Sessions and activities by Members and Partners;
 - Support APFIC human resources (e.g. through government secondments, and young professionals)

5.3.2 Formalising Regional Partnerships

- APFIC to approach COBSEA, and other regional seas programmes such as the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), to investigate agreements between similar partners and examine whether such a partnership could exist between these APFIC and these organisations. Examples where formal partnerships have been successful include GFCM and its Mediterranean Sea partners; NEAFC and OSPAR which both collaborate to protect the marine environment in the same geographic area, but only NEAFC does fishing activity. From consultation with these other bodies, APFIC and COBSEA should aim to collaborate and reach a new formal partnership for the region.
- APFIC to approach other regional RFBs and provide these RFBs with information on current APFIC projects and activities relating to capture fisheries and aquaculture so that other RFBs can look for potential areas of collaboration or exchange.

- APFIC to strengthen its relationship with regional and global Partners, NGOs and CSOs and, where lacking, to examine potential subjects for collaboration as well as possible mechanisms for formal partnerships.

5.3.1. Improving fishery and aquaculture ecosystems and habitats

- APFIC has already conducted work on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) Management. This work needs to be updated with renewed relevance to the region, including inland fisheries, so that it addresses the specific needs of the region. Once completed the material needs to be developed into workshops which are widely conducted throughout the region to support EAF management planning.
- Accompanying activities must be conducted into a regionally specific Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA), including widely conducted workshops to promote the EAA.
- Accompanying efforts must be conducted on ecosystem-based management and geospatial planning in APFIC member countries.
- APFIC to collaborate with FAO, UN Environment and the Large Marine Ecosystems on marine litter, invasive species, and climate change and to create a strategic framework on how best to minimize the consequences of these problems in the region.
- APFIC to liaise with the United Nations for legal workshops to be held in the region which explain the national and regional expectations on member countries if they are to demonstrate that they are addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Climate Action, Life Below water, Life on Land and Clean water and sanitation are all directly relevant to improving ecosystems and habitats.
- APFIC to conduct a comparative assessment on fisheries gear: the social, economic and environmental consequences of responsible / sustainable gear versus unsustainable gear. This science-based knowledge to be constructed into a regional workshop.
- APFIC members need to re-examine the goal expressed in their last strategic plan for sub area-based projects: China Sea, East Asian Sea, Sulawesi Sea, Arafura-Timor Sea and the Natuna Sea. Do the Commission members want to persist with this specific approach, and how will they monitor its success, or do they want to work on a region-wide approach addressing region-wide problems?

5.3.2. Supporting small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and a human rights-based approach to fisheries and aquaculture development

- Drafting a regional plan of action for the promotion and application of the SSF Guidelines in the APFIC region.
- Implement a regional survey on small-scale fisheries for the purpose of providing a more comprehensive regional data base on the extent of this activity.
- APFIC will liaise with the International Labour Organization to promote the principle of decent work as defined in the Work in Fishing Convention (C188) so as to promote, (without compromising environmental sustainability), the improvement of socio-economic conditions within small-scale fisheries.
- APFIC to liaise with the United Nations for legal workshops to be held in the region which explain the national and regional expectations on member countries if they are to demonstrate that they are addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender Equality and Decent Work and Economic Growth are both directly relevant to improving the status of small-scale fishers.

5.3.3. Combating IUU fishing and fisheries related crime

- Support regional plans of action to combat IUU fishing in APFIC member countries.
- Encourage member countries to legislate (hard law) against IUU fishing at the national level and providing them with legal advice or assistance for the content of these laws.
- Enhance regional and national systems of monitoring, control and surveillance, including research into the feasibility of observer programmes.
- Promote the FAO Port State Measures Agreement in the APFIC region – including workshops to demonstrate how member countries are to comply with the Agreement.
- Promote the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes including regional workshops to demonstrate how member countries can comply with the guidelines.
- APFIC to collaborate with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime regarding fisheries related crime and how this can best be curbed in the region. This includes the use of fishing vessels for human trafficking, modern slavery, the smuggling of goods, drugs and endangered wildlife.

5.3.4. Improving the safety of fish as food and developing fish trade

- APFIC to collaborate with FAO to aid its developing country fish producers to build sustainable fisheries and move up the value chain.
- APFIC to conduct workshops on inclusive trade-related measures to strengthen the value chain and enable small producers to move towards certification standards

(where relevant). An inclusive approach is necessary to involve FAO, APFIC, member country national governments, donors and where appropriate the leading market firms.

- APFIC to note and address the specific request for assistance from Timor-Leste which needs to know whether a domestic fishing industry is even viable for the country. The country requests assistance to conduct a survey of East Timor's fisheries potential, and a fisheries stock assessment so that the government has a strong foundation for planning the sustainable use of their fishery resources.
- APFIC to consolidate knowledge and provide capacity building on Aquaculture food safety, particularly antimicrobial resistance and facilitating improved strains of emerging species.
- APFIC to provide regional workshops on the safe production, handling, processing and transportation of fish as food.

6. CONCLUSION

The Asia Pacific Fishery Commission is at a cross roads in its history. It cannot continue on its current path without encountering a mass of obstacles that will threaten its effectiveness and possibly its existence. To ensure its survival, the Commission must turn away from its current path and explore new roads. It will not be alone on these new roads, it will be accompanied by its members and partners. The journey is ambitious, but possible.

This strategic plan has formulated a mantra for the journey: six years, six foundation principles, six themes and six goals for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development in the member countries of the Commission.

APPENDIX ONE: MEMBER COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOCAL POINTS IN APFIC MEMBER COUNTRIES

1. What are your priorities for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors?:

The below table lists 20 subjects which may be problematic for your sustainable management of inland or marine capture fisheries and aquaculture. In addition, there are three blank lines for you to include any subjects that might not be included in the table.

Please score these subjects out of 5 with a grade entered in the right-hand column:

- '5' means the issue is an urgent high priority for you
- '4' means the issue is a priority for you
- '3' means the issue is of average concern to you
- '2' means the issue is a low concern for you
- '1' means the issue is not a concern for you

Collection of, accuracy of, and / or gaps in fisheries related data	
Strengthening fisheries and aquaculture scientific advice	
Illegal, Unreported or Unregulated (IUU) fishing	
Implementing sustainable aquaculture development	
Implementing sustainable fisheries management practices	
Implementing monitoring, control and surveillance in fisheries and aquaculture (including observer programmes)	
Implementing a catch documentation scheme	
Updating national fisheries and / or aquaculture legislation or regulations	
Maintaining ecosystem health and diversity	

The implications of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture	
Fishing gear selectivity and regulations	
Fishing overcapacity	
Managing fisheries bycatch	
Managing invasive species	
Ensuring fish as food security for increasing populations	
Enhancing and regulating fisheries trade	
Measuring and enhancing fisheries sector resiliency from ocean-related hazards	
Technology sharing and capacity building in fisheries and aquaculture	
Understanding linkages between water and inland fisheries development	
Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries	
Other	
Other	
Other	

2. What are your priorities with respect to global and regional policy support?

Over the past five years there has been global and regional progress with the development of a number of conventions (policies and soft and hard laws) relating to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, oceans, biodiversity and climate change. In many cases, the content of these new legal initiatives is of relevance to fisheries

management as the instruments directly or indirectly further the widely endorsed principles in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. < <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/v9878e/v9878e00.htm> >

Please mark the below left square if APFIC can assist with your understanding of the fishery-related impacts of, OR your compliance with, the fishery-related principles in, the following instruments:

	<p>Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) http://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom.htm</p>
	<p>FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS) http://www.fao.org/fi/static-media/MeetingDocuments/CDS/TC2016/wpAnnex.pdf</p>
	<p>UN Sustainable Development Goals, with particular attention to the voluntary commitments of APFIC member countries to the fishery implications in SDGs 14 and 15 (SDGs) https://oceanconference.un.org/</p>
	<p>The Paris Climate Change Declaration (CC Declaration) http://ufccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9444.php</p>
	<p>FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (Revised Edition) (PSMA) http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5469t.pdf</p>
	<p>FAO International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines) http://www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/quidelines/en</p>
	<p>FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification http://www.fao.org/3/a-i2296t.pdf</p>
	<p>Other, please identify:</p>

3. How can APFIC be of more relevance and benefit to future fisheries and aquaculture in your member country?

(Note: APFIC is constrained by resources and mandate, but where it is possible to address the specific needs of our member countries, we aim to do so.)

4. Looking back to the APFIC strategic plan 2012-2018 (EXCO/17/INF/4-b) an aim in this previous strategy was to respond to the changing needs of member countries and partners. Accordingly, that plan included new and additional activities and subjects. Please rate the performance of the APFIC Secretariat over the past six years with regard to the following issues:

Activity	Poor	Fair	Good
Overall performance of the Commission			
Communications and updating of the APFIC website			
Our monitoring of status and trends in fisheries and aquaculture			
Our focus on marine capture fisheries by areas: China Sea, East Asian Sea, Sulawesi Sea, Arafura-Timor Sea, Natuna Sea			
Developing sustainable aquaculture			
How well have we addressed the regional outcomes listed in Annex One of the last strategy?			
Is the Secretariat communicating well? Would you prefer us to use social media such as Twitter?			

***** END OF QUESTIONNAIRE ****

APPENDIX TWO: PARTNER ORGANISATION QUESTIONNAIRE

For questions 1-3 please tick one of the table boxes:

- 1. How effective has APFIC been in the past five years in supporting its members to achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development?**

Not effective	Of limited effectiveness	Effective	Very Effective

- 2. How relevant have APFIC’s past activities been to the work being conducted by your organisation?**

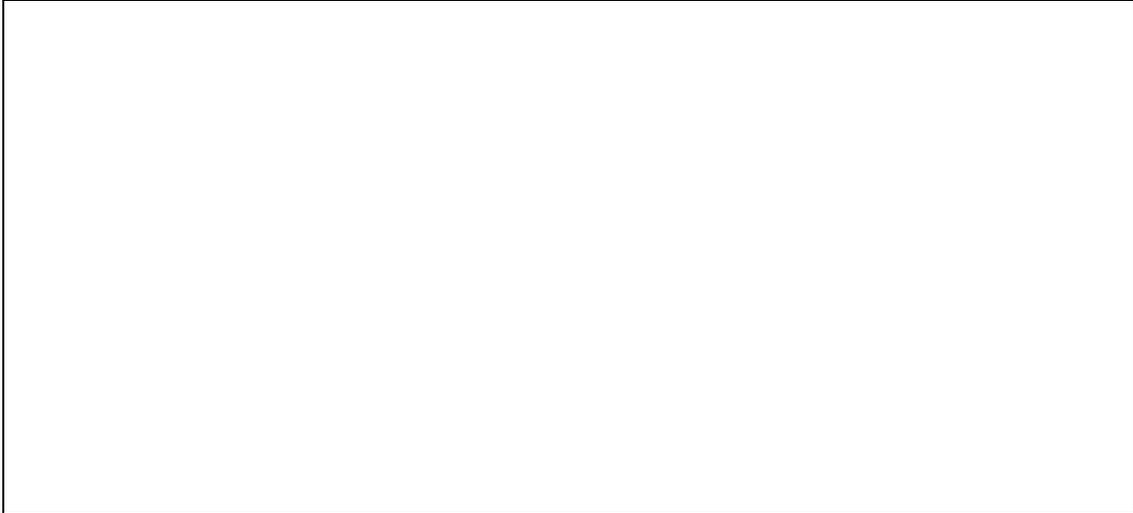
Not relevant	Of limited Relevance	Relevant	Very Relevant

- 3. Over the past five years has your organisation interacted / coordinated / collaborated with, or used information from, APFIC?**

Not at all	On limited occasions	Often	Very Often

- 4. Can you propose any suggested changes on how APFIC could more effectively (a) support its member countries, and (b) strengthen regional cooperation and lesson-sharing?**

5. What do you think should be the priority areas for APFICs work in 2019-2023?



APPENDIX THREE: MEMBER COUNTRY AND PARTNER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE WORK PLAN OF APFIC³¹

- Develop more technical guidelines for aquaculture
- Increase technology sharing and capacity building amongst members
- Increase policy and technical information sharing amongst members
- Capacity building of government staff managing fisheries
- More assistance to implement the FAO PSMA and aquaculture certification
- Promote best practice in the issues of aquatic animal health and biodiversity
- Prevent the risk of antimicrobial resistance in aquaculture
- Promote climate resistance or smart aquaculture
- Capacity building in combating IUU fishing
- Training on implementation of PSMA
- Strengthen the management of fisheries
- Ecosystem approach to aquaculture and ecosystem approach to fisheries
- Construct a survey of fisheries potential and fisheries stock assessment
- Capacity building
- Fish health
- The Nutrition value of fish
- Genetic improvements to farmed fish
- Enhancing culture-based fisheries
- Managing aquatic diversities in natural water bodies
- Formulating fisheries and aquaculture related policies, Acts and guidelines
- Facilitating fish trade
- Facilitating the import of improved strains of emerging species
- Food safety for domestic and international markets – including use of antibiotics for the treatment of fish diseases, and what impacts this will have on consumers
- Implementation of EAA and the environmental impacts of aquaculture
- Facilitating improvements in the aquaculture value chain and enhancing fish trade and markets
- The use of unsustainable fishing gears,
- IUU links to fisheries related crime including human trafficking, modern slavery, smuggling of goods, drugs and endangered species
- IUU fishing

³¹ The above list of dot points has been randomly selected from member country and partner feedback in order to disguise the identity of the contributor. Some items are repeated as they have been raised by more than one contributor.

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- Restoring the oceans for the good of the marine resources, the fishers, coastal communities and all people.
- Ecosystem approach to fisheries and ecosystem approach to aquaculture
- Providing expert scientific and technical advice to member countries
- Maintaining a database to monitor the fisheries developments of member countries
- Maintaining a website to monitor progress, new events and developments in the sector
- Supporting international and regional events to share experience, good practices and lessons learned
- Acting as a catalyst in improving the fisheries value chain and trade
- Cooperate more with existing Regional Fishery Bodies to strengthen sub-regional cooperation
- Combating IUU fishing by enhancing Catch Documentation and Traceability in capture fisheries and aquaculture
- APFIC should consider the common issues for all the region, not localised issues
- Provide other RFBs with information on current APFIC projects and activities relating to capture fisheries and aquaculture so that RFBs can look for potential areas of collaboration or exchange.
- Better control the small scale fishing fleets, including the Blue Boats
- Improve the sustainability of fisheries in the region through capacity development and the sharing of best practices
- Developing best practice and / or a pilot project for sustainable fisheries management regarding issues of climate change adaptation and marine biodiversity conservation
- Engage regional fishery / aquaculture organisations from other regions for spreading knowledge
- Climate change impacts and building adaptive management
- Biotechnology (fish pathogens and genetics) for farmers / stakeholders
- Sustainable farming and post-harvest technology
- Aquaculture marketing, trade and certification
- GIS and spatial planning
- Projects and activities to support small-scale fishers
- Teaching sustainable fisheries awareness from the grass roots
- Region-wide activity focusing on each member country's requirements in implementing responsible fisheries and aquaculture
- APFIC to reach out to other regional organisations

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- The eradication of all threats to the habitat of fisheries: IUU fishing and PSMA, climate change, pollution
- APFIC and the Regional Seas programmes to have formal cooperation agreements with shared priorities and the expectations of their collaboration
- APFIC, the LMEs and the Regional Seas to develop joint actions especially on scientific issues, as a foundation for decision making, to address particular issues or pressures such as pollution, and the application of key approaches and tools such as marine managed areas
- Ecosystem based management / area-based management
- Marine (plastic) litter from fisheries and aquaculture
- APFIC to make more frequent visits to member countries
- Increase interactions through virtual conferences / meetings with member countries
- Strengthening partnerships with Inter Governmental Organisations and other relevant organisations based in the region
- Publishing a newsletter for lesson sharing
- Complementary and collaborative planning with the IGOs based in the region to pool resources, which can allow cost sharing and the pooling of expertise
- Promote the adaptation of global knowledge into the region
- Increase activities leading to institutional and human capacity building in the region
- Strengthening fisheries information (biological, socio-economics, climate)
- Reducing IUU fishing
- Promoting responsible fish production (capture and aquaculture)
- Promoting the ecosystem approach to fisheries management
- Improve the working conditions (in both fisheries and aquaculture), reducing fatalities at sea and ensuring the protection of migrant workers
- Enhancing the scope of engagement of women in fisheries and aquaculture
- Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in fisheries and aquaculture
- Assisting member-countries in trade and market access related matters
- Better implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Small Scale Fisheries into the functioning of APFIC and its member countries, especially the human rights-based approach to fisheries development
- Consult more with State and non-State actors including fishing communities especially when formulating and recommending measures for the sustainable use of fishery resources, and while reviewing the social and economic aspects of fishing and aquaculture aimed at improving the living and working conditions of fishers and members of fishing communities

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- Encourage multi portfolio engagement within member countries to cover human rights, human development, fisheries, environment, labour, agriculture, finance etc are all effectively addressed in a coherent fashion
- Since the UNGA has declared the year 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, APFIC should identify small scale artisanal fisheries as a priority area. It should formulate and recommend measures to enhance the contribution of small scale artisanal fisheries to food security and nutrition and the equitable development of small scale fishing communities in the APFIC region
- Better implementation of fisheries management measures, in particular port state measures, improving the compliance assessment process, strengthening data collection, management and reporting and strengthening the science management interface.