

APFIC Regional Consultative Workshop

Certification schemes for capture fisheries and aquaculture

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam
18–20 September 2007



**APFIC REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP
CERTIFICATION SCHEMES FOR CAPTURE FISHERIES
AND AQUACULTURE**

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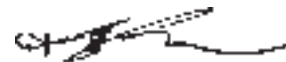
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FOREWORD

This Workshop is contributing to the ongoing process of transforming the Asia–Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) into a consultative forum for APFIC members and organizations working in the region. The 29th Session of the APFIC recommended that, as one of its two major work themes in 2007-08, APFIC should focus on standards and trade in the fishery sector as one of the emerging issues in the region. In particular, the member countries specifically requested APFIC to review the costs and benefits associated with certification schemes for fisheries and aquaculture in the APFIC region. This regional consultative workshop was convened in response to this recommendation. The APFIC secretariat and the cohosting government Viet Nam convened the Regional Consultative Workshop in Ho Chi Minh City from 18 to 20 September 2007, with the objective of evaluating the potential for capture fisheries and aquaculture certification schemes and issues relating to their sustainability and implementation in the region.

It is recognized that fisheries and aquaculture certification could offer tangible benefits to APFIC member countries. However, this report concludes that a number of issues should be addressed for certification to contribute effectively to the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture in the region. It is crucial that there is considerable regional involvement in certification, especially on issues related to small-scale operations which are so important for the region. It is recommended that a higher degree of harmonization and equivalence of certification schemes should be explored. The number of certification schemes is increasing and this can potentially bring up the cost for both producers and consumers. The costs and benefits should be evenly distributed along the value chain. The report specifically notes that the producers should not bear the costs associated with certification alone. Governance and stakeholder involvement is crucial to ensure not only good certification schemes but a sustainable development of the sector. A final point is the need for capacity building at both regional and national levels.

For the future development of both fisheries and aquaculture, especially in the Asia–Pacific region, it is crucial to ensure the involvement of small-scale fisheries and farmers as they represent a significant factor. In Asia alone 12 million people are directly employed in aquaculture.



He Changchui

Assistant Director-General and
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WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Workshop recognized that fisheries and aquaculture certification could offer tangible benefits to the APFIC Member Countries, but also recognized that a number of issues should be addressed for certification to effectively contribute to the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture in the region. These issues concern:

- Harmonization and equivalence of certification schemes
- Specifically addressing the issues relating to small-scale fisheries and farmers
- Governance and stakeholder involvement
- Involvement of regional organizations in the development and promotion of certification
- Costs and benefits of certification schemes
- Capacity building at both regional and national levels

Capture fisheries

It was widely recognized that fisheries management is underfunded in the Asia–Pacific region, and the workshop agreed that environmental and social certification offered an effective approach to identifying deficiencies in fisheries management and practical solutions to address them. *The Workshop emphasized that any schemes developed or operating in the region should be in compliance with the FAO guidelines for the ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from marine capture fisheries.*

Small-scale fisheries have particular potential for being sustainable and socially-equitable, especially if linked to co-management arrangements. The Workshop recognized that small-scale fisheries can be certified, especially through innovative adaptations of certification methods (e.g. incorporating traditional knowledge and non-data intensive approaches, etc.).

The certification of small-scale fisheries presents some unique challenges and is vulnerable to negative interactions from external operations, particularly where regulation is weak and does not protect inshore or small-scale fisheries. The Workshop also noted that small-scale fisheries might also benefit from other initiatives, such as first or second party verification or possibly branding. However, it was strongly emphasized that non-ecolabel/non-third party approaches run the risk of driving unsustainable practices if they are not closely associated with fisheries management objectives and a degree of monitoring.

The Workshop recognized that government and regional organizations as well as the private sector could support the entry of fisheries into certification schemes. Indeed, it is clear that fisheries were currently, less of a driving force for certification than these other bodies, possibly due to the lack of immediate/apparent benefits accruing to them. It was emphasized that long-term sustainability would require the move towards consumers bearing more of the costs than they do presently and more effective transfer of benefits to producers.

The Workshop acknowledged the need to build capacity in the region to identify and promote the certification of sustainable fisheries and the need to support national capacity to implement the FAO guidelines for the ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from marine capture fisheries. This is in order to ensure a harmonized approach to certification and its use as a tool to improve fisheries management.

The Workshop recommended the following:

At national level, there is a need for APFIC members establish a strategy for rolling out certification as both a market development tool as well as one to use certification methodologies to target fisheries management interventions. The national strategy should clearly distinguish the mandatory

food safety issues from other desirable fisheries management objectives, which may be voluntary in nature.

As part of the above strategy, APFIC members should conduct a national ‘stock takes’ into the status of the management of their key fisheries. This should identify those fisheries with either good management, or those with weak management but with a potential to improve. These could be classified either (i) as fisheries with potential for market-driven ecolabelling or, (ii) fisheries that might not require an ecolabel but would benefit from a holistic assessment of its fisheries management strengths and weaknesses to prioritize future management initiatives and work planning.

Recognizing the general inadequate allocation of resources for fisheries management, it was recommended that there should be deliberate targeting of resources or incentives for sustainable practice, thus rewarding those with a will to move towards good management. The stock-taking of fisheries could be used to mobilize and direct resources towards those fisheries where there is the will to manage.

It was noted that small-scale fisheries which had (i) existing sustainable management methods and (ii) a recognized and distinguishable product, may not be able to undergo full third party certification. In such cases, there may be opportunities for branding and/or labelling of their products. However, such approaches may also drive unsustainable practices if there were no associated fisheries or environmental management objectives and associated monitoring.

Aquaculture

The APFIC region accounts for a significant proportion of global aquaculture production and represents a wealth of technical knowledge on sustainable aquaculture which is of relevance to certification. This capacity has prompted the development of a number of national certification schemes which are tailored to the socio-economic status of producers, especially small-scale producers. *The Workshop emphasized that any schemes developed or operating in the region should be in compliance with the forthcoming FAO Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification.*

The Workshop recommended the following:

The Workshop recommended that existing regional capacity and experience should be used by APFIC members to develop a regional certification scheme, which could be harmonized with other more specific national or commodity/system focused schemes already operating in the region.

In view of the predominance of small-scale producers in the APFIC region and their constraints in complying with many certification schemes, the Workshop recommended that schemes operating in the region should be developed and/or revised to be beneficial to producers, allow for cluster certification and incremental improvement against targets.

The Workshop observed that the costs associated with compliance with most certification schemes, are generally not offset by premium prices and/or other clearly documented benefits. Thus the Workshop recommended that APFIC members promote the development and/or revision of aquaculture certification schemes in order to ensure that benefits are maximized and cost controlled, whilst maintaining compliance with the FAO guidelines on aquaculture certification. To achieve this objective the development and accreditation of both private and government certification bodies should be promoted.

The Workshop recognized that aquaculture sustainability is a responsibility shared by a broad range of stakeholders. Therefore, the Workshop recommended that certification should be developed in

compliance with international norms on development of standards, transparency and the FAO guidelines, particularly with respect to including directly affected stakeholders.

The Workshop acknowledged that most APFIC countries have significant resourcing and capacity constraints to implement certification at both the producer level and within fishery institutions. The Workshop recommended that APFIC members support capacity building on better management practices and certification issues, in addition to developing mechanisms that facilitate capacity building (e.g. financial, insurance based).

OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

Opening speech by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Pham Trong Yen

1. On behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Fishery sector of Viet Nam, Mr Pham Trong Yen welcomed the participants to Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) in Viet Nam to attend the APFIC Regional Workshop on Certification schemes in Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Asia region in HCMC, Viet Nam from 18 to 20 September 2007. The Government of Viet Nam expressed its gratitude to be able to host this important APFIC meeting. He noted that over the last decade fisheries and aquaculture in Viet Nam and the Asia region has developed rapidly, contributing considerably to national economies and an improved livelihood for millions of fishers and fishery communities in rural and coastal areas of countries in the region.

Opening speech by FAO and APFIC Secretariat

Simon Funge-Smith

2. Mr Simon Funge-Smith, Acting Secretary of APFIC welcomed all the participants to the Workshop. He noted that the Workshop was a good opportunity for governments in the APFIC region, other stakeholders and a number of resource persons to openly discuss issues surrounding certification in capture fisheries and aquaculture. He noted that the regional workshop was held as a follow-up on recommendations made by the APFIC members at the RCFM and the 29th APFIC Session held in Kuala Lumpur in 2006. Mr Funge-Smith thanked the Vietnamese government for cohosting the Workshop and the excellent arrangement made that contributed to the success of the Workshop. He also expressed his sincere thanks to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for supporting this activity and for the Swedish Board of Fisheries to be present at the Workshop. He furthermore thanked the other APFIC partners, resource persons and other stakeholders that have joined the regional workshop on this important matter.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES AND MODUS OPERANDI

Background

3. The international trade in seafood is an important and expanding area of importance for countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Given that most of the top seafood producing countries is in the region it was crucial that information and analyses are done on costs and benefits. With the increased attention given to certification of fisheries and aquaculture products, there is a growing proliferation of product certification systems, “good aquaculture practice” guidelines, Codes of Conduct, and other mechanisms/schemes which are providing labels or basis for the marketing of high quality, safe and sustainable seafood products.

4. Without some harmonization among regional countries, this proliferation of certification schemes has the potential to confuse consumers, importing countries, lead to increased costs, and potentially constrain trade. Asian domestic and intraregional trade in seafood products is growing, in line with increasing free-trade agreements between countries. This opens new opportunities for trade and development, perhaps helping to avoid some of the complex procedures of other importing regions, but also poses challenges. This further emphasizes the need for harmonization of food safety assurance procedures among trading partners in Asia. Such cooperation may also avoid problems of residues being transferred from one country to another.
5. Producers and producing countries that internationally trade with seafood products are increasingly being scrutinized by consumers, supermarkets and importing countries to produce seafood following certain standards and criteria, e.g. food safety standards, environmental requirements, ethical considerations etc. To be able to continue exporting seafood products it is crucial that the producing countries are kept updated on requirements and should have continuous capacity building in areas related to standards and trade.
6. The 29th Session of the Asia–Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) recommended that, as one of its two major work themes in 2007-2008, APFIC should focus on standards and trade as one of the emerging issues in the region. In particular, the member countries specifically requested APFIC to review the costs and benefits associated with certification schemes for fisheries and aquaculture in the APFIC region. In response to this, APFIC convened this Regional Consultative Workshop for its members with the objective of evaluating the potential in capture fisheries and aquaculture certification schemes and what might be suitable for the region.
7. At the Third Session of the Sub-committee on Aquaculture of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held in New Delhi, India (4–8 September, 2006), FAO member countries recognized that internationally accepted guidelines for the development of certification of aquaculture products were needed. The Sub-committee members encouraged FAO to play a lead role in facilitating the development of these guidelines, which could be considered when national and regional aquaculture standards are developed.
8. It should be noted that through out this document, seafood refers to the products of both capture fisheries and aquaculture from marine, brackish water and freshwater environments.

Workshop goal and objective

9. This Workshop aimed to build on input to make a set of recommendations and follow-up actions in relation to certification schemes for Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Workshop would:
 - a) Examine the options and opportunities related to involvement of fisheries and aquaculture in certification schemes.
 - b) Discuss potential costs and benefits from certification schemes in an Asia–Pacific context; and
 - c) Develop an action plan for members to further address their activities relating to certification issues in fisheries and aquaculture. The action plan could involve recommendations as to how countries would engage with global programmes for certification, or how they may better inform themselves or engage with global decision-making processes regarding the development of such schemes. APFIC’s role in facilitating this would also be considered.
10. The goal of the Workshop was to have a consensus build by APFIC members and the relevant regional intergovernmental organizations on how to develop a full potential of certification schemes. It is hoped that the Workshop will agree on strategies to address the identified issues and design an “APFIC Member’s Plan of Action” to implement the strategies, at national, subregional and regional levels.

Mechanism of the Workshop

11. The Workshop was based around technical presentations relating to the three themes outlined in the objectives above. The Workshop included presentations consisting of country posters, partner initiatives/experiences and papers describing current status in the region or relevant to the region. The Workshop used a process of working groups to elaborate responses to a number of key questions:
 - a) What action needs to be taken to ensure participation of APFIC member countries in the certified markets (national, regional, global)?
 - b) What are the major costs and benefits from certification schemes?
 - c) How prepared are the national institutional arrangements to deal with existing and future certification systems (national, regional, global)?
 - d) What is the short term/medium term vision for the future for certification of fisheries and aquaculture in the region?
12. The workshop was attended by 49 participants from 13 APFIC member countries, INFOFISH, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), Swedish Board of Fisheries (SBF), International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) World Wildlife Fund for Nature-Greater Mekong (WWF-Greater Mekong) and some invited experts.

THEME I: FISHERIES CERTIFICATION IN ASIA–PACIFIC

Fisheries Certification: A study on Pros and Cons

Tim Huntington (APFIC Consultant)

13. At the 29th APFIC Session (21–24 August 2006) in Kuala Lumpur, member countries recommended that APFIC's work should focus on 'Certification in Fisheries' as one of the emerging issues for the fisheries sector in the region. A review paper was prepared to assess the potential costs and benefits of fisheries certification and branding for countries in the Asia–Pacific region. This does not examine certification of aquaculture production which was covered under a separate review paper.
14. The paper started by providing a comprehensive review of existing and recent environmental and social certification schemes in fisheries, as well as some examples of branding. It then considered the hypothetical and actual evidence for the demand for, and benefits of, such initiatives. Related costs were also discussed, before considering the net benefits of such initiatives i.e. benefits less costs. It was noted that there have been a lack of studies and very little published quantitative evidence on the financial costs or the benefits of certification or branding schemes. This lack of evidence is even more pronounced when it comes to an assessment of the net benefits. There is some evidence that the conditions attached to certified fisheries do encourage improved institutional structures and operational practices, but to date these are largely restricted to established, well managed fisheries.
15. The paper also summarized work by others which have highlighted the potential problems faced by developing country producers in engaging with both certification and branding initiatives, before presenting some possible solutions.
16. The presentation emphasized that there is no straightforward way to determine whether it is sensible to engage with certification and/or branding initiatives for particular products or fisheries. The net benefits are likely to be too specific to the particular country and product concerned the end market and the characteristics of the supply chain. Generalizing about the actual costs and benefits is, in

almost all cases, neither possible nor advisable. As a result, the review attempted to provide some assistance to APFIC members in how to make decisions about whether engaging in certification and/or branding initiatives is a good idea. This assistance took the form of some suggestions about how to conduct cost benefit analyses, as well as the presentation of a simple decision-making tree. This could be refined to ensure its practicality and replicability, and thus provide some real assistance to the countries concerned in making decisions about the feasibility of certification or branding for particular products or fisheries.

17. The paper concluded with the following:
 - a) There are many social and environmental certification schemes, but these are limited in terms of suitability for APFIC producers/retailers.
 - b) MSC and other environmental certification schemes are growing but still small in terms of overall global values.
 - c) To date, social certification schemes for fisheries have generally not been successful.
 - d) Seafood product branding is growing in importance.
 - e) Demand by different interest groups is very dependent on particular species, end consumer, country, sector (retail/food service), etc. In general (i) social schemes are not in strong demand, (ii) consumers are selfish in their buying behaviour, (iii) price premiums from certification in the long term may be unlikely, with benefits more likely in terms of market access and (iv) branding can be effective, but is costly and takes time.
 - f) APFIC members must be rational in initiating certification and branding initiatives, and must consider the *net* benefits.
 - g) Certification and branding are not the only potential methods for product promotion and there may be at least as much net benefit in working on other aspects (pricing, quality, new products, logistics improvements, etc.).
 - h) It is important to comply with basic mandatory requirements first before becoming concerned with other non-mandatory aspects.

Discussions

18. A question was raised if there were other sectors where certification has been successful. Several examples from the agriculture production were mentioned (e.g. coffee, bananas). Branding of domestic products was also mentioned as an alternative or a supplement to certification. This is normally targeted at a processed product and might be more for commercial-scale operations.
19. It was asked why there was no focus on food safety and certification of food safety. The reason is that the study is only on voluntary schemes and hence not covering the mandatory food safety certification. It was noted that most food safety regulation is mandatory and therefore not a certification scheme. There are examples of non-mandatory food safety schemes. Many consumers do consider voluntary organic certification as a food safety certification (no pesticides, antibiotics etc.).

Fisheries Certification in Asia–Pacific: A certification schemes perspective

Duncan Leadbitter and Kozo Ishii (Marine Stewardship Council, MSC)

20. The Marine Stewardship Council is now ten years old and has grown enormously since its inception. The MSC is an international standard setting body established to assist the improvement of fisheries management around the world. It relies on an ecolabelling programme, linked to

a certification programme to identify products from sustainable and well managed fisheries in the market place. To date there are nearly 900 products available in 28 products from 23 certified fisheries. An additional 30 fisheries are in the public phase (called full assessment) of the MSC process.

21. In terms of the Asia–Pacific region the MSC has products available in Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong SAR. Chain of custody certificates (traceability) are in place in China, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Australia and New Zealand. Certified fisheries and fisheries in full assessment are currently to be found in Viet Nam, Australia, Japan and New Zealand, whilst fisheries in pre-assessment are known to have occurred in Australia, Japan, Russian Far East and the Pacific Island Country members of the Forum Fisheries Agency.
22. The MSC has long been aware of the challenges posed by small-scale and data poor fisheries and has invested significant resources in creating an assessment system that can better evaluate such fisheries in a robust and credible manner. In 2007 and 2008 some trials of this new methodology are to be carried out. One such trial site is the Ben Tre clam fishery in Viet Nam which is to be subject to both the existing assessment methodology and the new one (as a trial only).
23. The MSC is also aware of the issue of costs and has taken a number of steps to reduce costs. This includes seeking an increase in the number of certification bodies, especially in regional countries and efforts to streamline and speed up the assessment process, without compromising quality or compliance with the FAO guidelines. Ecolabelling requires a presence in the market sector and brand awareness. The involvement of the private sector is critical to success. The motivations for private sector involvement are varied and not always driven by expectations of price premiums. However, there is a clear link between the level of private sector investment in product promotion and its performance in the marketplace.
24. The MSC believes it has strong potential in the Asia–Pacific region and has recently established an office in Japan. The MSC is willing to collaborate with national and regional companies and organizations to ensure its systems are relevant and its programme generates benefit for fisheries in the region.

Discussions

25. There was a question related to the cost of certification and how small-scale fisheries can afford to pay for getting certified and do the changes needed. There has been government support in some cases, but there is also increasingly private sector investment in certification e.g. Young's in the UK.
26. A question was raised on information on how data-poor fisheries can be certified, or if they qualify at all or if they qualify for the same label as the data sufficient fisheries? The answer was that there will only be one label. For data-poor fisheries there will be a risk-based process that generates an understating of the fishery that is both robust and credible. Regarding Chain of Custody, there needs to be a traceability certificate which gives a clear demonstration where the product has come from and guarantees the separation of product from non-certified equivalents. There must be appropriate technological approach to the fishery and this is especially for small-scale fisheries, risk-based approach offer potential ways to address this.

Product marketing and market access through use of labels – opportunities and potential restrictions

Sudari Pawiro (INFOFISH)

27. The global seafood trade grows steadily over the years reaching almost US\$83 billion in 2005 (import value), representing an increase of around 4.6 percent annually over the past five years. The bulk of the fishery products import went to developed countries taking more than 80 percent of the market share (in value term) with Japan, USA, China, Italy, Spain and France were among the top importers.
28. Demand for seafood in Japan, the largest single importing country in the world, however, has been in declining trend due to several factors: Slow economic growth in Japan since the 1990s, changing life style and taste among younger generation who increasingly prefer western food, changing household structure and stiff competition from other animal protein food products such as poultry and meat. The declining demand has been reflected in declining import trend for fishery products.
29. Conversely, demands for seafood in other major markets like the USA and EU has been growing steadily resulting in increasing imports into those countries. Around 80 percent of seafood consumed in the USA is from import which reached around US\$13 000 million last year with shrimp being the most popular product in the USA market. Another farmed fish which is gaining increasingly popular is tilapia which is among the top five most popular seafood products consumed in the market after shrimp, tuna, salmon and Pollock. Similarly import of seafood into the EU has also increased from US\$14 000 million in 2003 to US\$20 200 million last year (import from third countries only). There was also an increase in imports of frozen fish fillet, shrimp and canned seafood particularly canned tuna into the EU from Asian countries. The main trends in both developed and Asian markets are that consumers are increasingly looking for ethnic based food products (such as Japanese, Indian foods), healthy foods, organic foods, convenience foods and green products.
30. In order to tap the growing demand for seafood in the global market, many seafood exporting countries have been trying hard to get better access for their products especially in the developed markets. This is done mainly through bilateral, regional or multilateral trade agreements to reduce or minimize barriers to trade, both non-tariff and tariff barriers. Tariffs barriers in developed markets such as Japan, USA and EU are generally lower where by average applied import tariff is only around 4 percent (FAO). However, there is an increasing number of non-tariff barriers erected in the developed markets especially measures related to seafood quality and safety issues.
31. Government labelling regulations are usually very straightforward and aimed mainly to protect the consumers and mandatory in nature. Private labelling schemes are mainly market-driven labels such as ecolabel, organic label and private/supermarket labels. The mushrooming of ecolabel and organic label in recent years is mainly driven by supermarket chains as a result of pressure from green or environmental groups as well as consumer groups.
32. Supermarkets are increasingly becoming the main trend-setter in ecolabel products in the global market. This is due to the fact that supermarket chains are expanding very quickly all over the world that give them power to pressure producers to reduce prices, set quality standard, enforce voluntary measures (e.g. ecolabel) and cut off or eliminate traditional channels. Many multinational supermarket chains have adopted ecolabelling schemes, set up their own ecolabel scheme and enforce measures related sustainability in fisheries such as ban certain species to be sold in their outlets.
33. Research done in the USA showed that consumers give more priority on quality and price when buying seafood in supermarkets. However, recent research done by the Hartman Group, USA found

that around 71 percent of consumers said that they were likely or very likely to pay 10 percent more for sustainable products.

34. There are however other constraints and issues with regard to ecolabel such as: consumers tend to confuse with the existing different ecolabel currently in the markets; cost related to obtaining ecolabel scheme that currently cannot be passed on to consumers; ecolabel as a barriers for small players to enter lucrative market in developed countries (supermarkets); unilateral action taken by supermarkets that affect market access for certain products; caterers/restaurants are still slow in adopting ecolabel; potential conflict between producers and buyers (supermarkets, agents etc.).
35. In conclusion, even though the market for ecolabel products is still relatively very small, it is expected to grow further mainly driven by supermarket chains.

Discussion

36. It was noted that there was a lack of response to consumer surveys on labels, therefore who actually demands ecolabelled fish? It was noted that there was some consumer demand for ecolabelled fish.
37. A second question was raised regarding voluntary labels and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Is there any information available on trade disputes that might demonstrate conflicts or disagreements over market access? The presenter was not aware of any disputes or any basis for bringing this to WTO.
38. In the discussion it was mentioned that India and China are investing in shrimp production, especially at high-level products for the increasing middle class. Will this be a growing trend in Asia? China has a growing demand for domestic consumption, including a higher proportion of high value species such as live grouper and lobster which are in greater demand. However this will exert pressure on limited stocks such as tuna. The food service sector is also developing in China, as well as large retailers which are driving up demand, especially for high value products. In India there is a large market, but the main problem is the difficulty by other countries to penetrate Indian domestic markets.

Ecolabelling in small-scale fisheries

Martin Bjerner and Magnus Torell (SEAFDEC and Sida)

39. The reliance on fisheries and aquaculture in the Southeast Asian region for food security is evident as is the contribution to poverty alleviation. Furthermore, aquatic products also bring large amounts of foreign revenue to the region. However, there is a general concern that overexploitation of the marine and inland resources have led to a continuous decline in fisheries productivity. At the same time, aquaculture has, by some, been perceived as a potential to compensate for the reduced marine productivity so as to meet the demand in local and global markets. The dependency of fisheries and aquaculture on natural resources – and the need for a healthy environment – and the importance of these sectors when it comes to national economies are well recognized. Hence, a common concern in the region has been raised over how to maintain sustainable trade of fisheries and aquaculture products while at the same time ensure sustainable livelihood of the local people.
40. During the last decade increasing reference has been made to the use and prospects of “ecolabelling” with regards to fish, fisheries and fish products. At the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security in the New Millennium: “Fish for the People” (November 2001), ASEAN-SEAFDEC member countries agreed upon a Resolution and Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region. In the Plan of Action it was recommended that ASEAN countries should “Anticipate and address the potential impacts of ecolabelling of ASEAN fish and fishery products”.

41. Without trying to define “ecolabelling” in the ASEAN region, there are a variety of different initiatives that if “standardized” could be considered as ecolabels or attempts at developing ecolabels. Examples of this include “mangrove friendly aquaculture”, production in accordance with a “code of conduct for sustainable shrimp farming”, “dolphin and turtle friendly tuna”, etc. At corporate level, attempts are made to provide green labels to meet increasing domestic demands for products developed in more sustainable ways.
42. At the 26th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, (COFI) (March 2005), ecolabelling was one of the important points on the agenda. This was subsequently discussed at the Seventh Meeting of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) and at the 37th meeting of the SEAFDEC Council (April 2005). After discussions and deliberation on the outcomes of the fisheries related issues at the COFI-meeting, the SEAFDEC Council requested SEAFDEC to conduct a regional study on ecolabelling from the regional view point as a basis for future consideration.

Discussion

43. It was noted that the capacity building efforts mentioned were very comprehensive and the presenter was asked who the future specific capacity building efforts would be aimed at. The capacity building from SEAFDEC and Sida are targeting all through the production and marketing chain so also in the future the efforts will be broad and comprehensive.
44. In the presentation there was a mention about a case study in Thailand and some participants were interested in more information about what issues there would be the focus of Thai inland fish certification pilot study. There would be a focus on contamination but also biodiversity issues.
45. Several of the participants mentioned the relevance of supporting small-scale fisheries certification development as it is seen as very relevant and important to the region.

Guidelines for the ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from marine capture fisheries

Rolf Willmann (FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department)

46. In introducing this agenda item, it was explained that the FAO marine fisheries ecolabelling guidelines were developed against a backdrop of the increasing overexploitation of a growing number of commercially important fish stocks, concern with incidental bycatches and disappointment about the slow progress made with the implementation of conventional fisheries management. The immediate impetus for addressing the issue of fisheries ecolabelling in FAO arose from the launch of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) initiative by Unilever and WWF in early 1996. The reactions to this initiative were mixed. While it was applauded by some industry groups, conservation organizations and governments, many fisheries stakeholders and governments were initially sceptical about it.
47. At the behest of primarily several Scandinavian countries, FAO convened a first technical consultation in October 1998 to examine the practicality and feasibility of FAO drafting technical guidelines for ecolabelling of marine fisheries products. While it could not reach a consensus on this matter at that time, the consultation developed some principles for ecolabelling and agreed that any future guidelines needed to be consistent with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. It was only at the 25th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2003 that FAO members reached a consensus on the development of guidelines, which then over a period of two years were developed in a series of expert and technical consultations and adopted at the 26th Session of COFI in 2005.

48. Underlying the call for international guidelines were a number of concerns including
- (i) The threat that ecolabelling schemes could be used as new forms of barriers to trade;
 - (ii) The scientific basis of certification standards and criteria;
 - (iii) The potential difficulties for developing countries to participate in such schemes, especially the small-scale producers; and
 - (iv) Last but not the least the potential confusion among traders and consumers which may derive from the utilization of a number of various and diverse product labels, themselves relating to different criteria and standards.
49. The principal contents of the FAO guidelines include principles, general considerations, terms and definitions, minimum substantive requirements and criteria, and the procedural and the institutional aspects relating to governance arrangements for ecolabelling schemes and provisions for the setting of standards, accreditation and certification. It was stressed that the focus of the guidelines was on issues related to the sustainable use of fisheries resources. Social aspects including conditions of work were excluded from the scope of the guidelines as consensus on them may have been difficult to attain among FAO member countries.
50. The FAO guidelines contain a set of principles relating to aspects such as consistency with all relevant international laws, recognition of the sovereign rights of states, the voluntary and market-driven nature of ecolabelling, transparency and fair participation by all interested parties, non-discrimination and avoidance of unnecessary obstacles to trade, fair trade and competition, clear accountability for the owners of schemes and the certification bodies, incorporation of reliable, independent auditing and verification procedures, equivalence, based on the best scientific evidence, also taking into account traditional knowledge, ensure that labels communicate truthful information, provide for clarity, and be based, at a minimum, on the minimum substantive requirements, criteria and procedures outlined in the FAO guidelines. The principle of transparency should apply to all aspects of an ecolabelling scheme including its organizational structure and financial arrangements.
51. The section on general considerations of the guidelines seeks to create, to the extent possible, an equal playing field among countries by, *inter alia*, recognizing the special conditions and requirements of developing countries and countries in transition on the one hand, while calling for one unique minimum standard on the other hand, in order to avoid any notion of superior or inferior categories of ecolabelled fish and fishery products. The section also addresses the view of many governments that they should be fully involved, not just individually but also as members of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), in ecolabelling schemes. It recognizes that governments play, or need to play, a paramount and often indispensable role in fisheries management.
52. The section on terms and definitions draws heavily on terminology, definitions and standards agreed within the framework of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) dealing with general requirements on accreditation and certification. It also contains a series of definitions that were specifically developed for capture fisheries ecolabelling.
53. The guidelines set out the minimum substantive requirements and criteria for assessing whether a fishery can be certified and awarded an ecolabel. It keeps open the option for ecolabelling schemes to apply additional or more stringent requirements and criteria. The section was largely informed by the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Minimum requirements are specified for each of the three areas: management systems, target stocks, and ecosystem considerations. This is in keeping with the idea that both the process and the outcome of management need to be considered. The requirements acknowledge that conventional stock assessment methods may not be

possible nor necessarily appropriate in all cases, especially small-scale fisheries, and that “less elaborate” methods may be used.

54. There was considerable concern amongst some countries, especially some developing countries about the inclusion of ecosystem considerations. In many countries current knowledge on ecosystems and ecosystem impacts is weak because of the lack of data and research due to financial and human resources constraints. The inclusion of ecosystem considerations could therefore become an effective barrier to obtaining an ecolabel and consequently a barrier to trade. The ecosystem provisions of the guidelines represent a reasonable compromise between the position of some countries seeking more stringent requirements and criteria and others that wished to see ecosystem considerations entirely omitted from the guidelines.
55. The guidelines addressed the three principal procedural and institutional matters that any ecolabelling scheme should encompass: (1) the setting of certification standards, (2) the accreditation of independent certifying bodies, and (3) the certification that a fishery and the product chain of custody are in conformity with the required standard and procedures.
56. The guidelines are not overly prescriptive on the governance structure beyond the need to keep apart the ownership of the ecolabelling scheme from accreditation and certification functions. Ecolabelling schemes could be established by government, an intergovernmental organization, a non-governmental organization or a private industry association. There are also various options for the geographical range of a scheme-national, regional or international.
57. The setting of standards is among the most critical tasks of any ecolabelling scheme. The standards reflect the objectives for sustainable fisheries that are being pursued through the scheme. At the core of standard-setting norms are the ideas of consultation and participation of interested parties in a transparent and well-informed process of standard setting that provides for appropriate notification and minimum time periods for commenting.
58. The purpose of accreditation is to provide assurance that certification bodies responsible for conducting conformity assessments with sustainability standards and chain of custody requirements are competent to carry out such tasks. The guidelines lay down the requirements for accreditation organizations to perform this task professionally in a transparent, impartial, independent, and accountable fashion.
59. Certification is an integral and indispensable part of any ecolabelling scheme. In fisheries, ecolabelling provides assurance to buyers and consumers that a certain fish or fishery product comes from a fishery that conforms to the established standard for a sustainable fishery. The guidelines provide for two types of certification, certification of the fishery itself and certification of the chain of custody between the time the fish is harvested and the time the fish or fishery product is sold to the final consumer. To ensure non-discrimination, the access to the services of a certification body should be open to all types of fisheries whether managed by a regional, governmental, or non-governmental fisheries management organization or arrangement. Access to certification should not be conditional upon the size or scale of the fishery.
60. In concluding, it was stressed that the FAO guidelines are a unique voluntary international instrument that establishes minimum standards in procedural and substantive terms. The guidelines can help to prevent the proliferation of non-credible ecolabels, contribute to the creation of an equal playing field by recognizing the special conditions and requirements of fisheries in developing countries and countries in transition, provide clarity on equivalence of ecolabelling schemes and non-discrimination, avoid unnecessary barriers to trade, and establish the legitimacy of ecolabelling applied to fisheries. The presentation emphasized the mutually beneficial nature of sustainably managed fisheries to consumers and producers alike. What was needed are much greater efforts and

investments into fisheries management. Ecolabelling and certification can help to raise widespread awareness about the urgency of introducing better management practices and mobilizing greater financial and technical resources. In this context, it was mentioned that in the context of the ongoing WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies, management related subsidies by government were explicitly listed among the group of “good” subsidies.

Discussion

61. It was noted that MSC have spent US\$30 million developing the standard to date and now spend US\$4-5 million per year. It was noted that the MSC scheme comply with the FAO guidelines but this is rarely recognized. Has FAO analysed what schemes do – and do not comply with their guidelines? It was noted that it was not the role of FAO to control certification schemes. Some countries considered this as a potential mean towards reducing schemes which are not based on the best scientific information. This depends upon FAO members – if FAO is asked to make a judgment, then FAO can provide technical support to the member country.
62. Regarding standard setting and equivalence, trade dispute are to be resolved by WTO, but if there is a standard that you believe is incorrect or a barrier or biased, how do you resolve this matter? Where is the forum to take this up? It was noted that if a private company or label apparently is at fault, it is difficult to take any punitive action. However it was noted that that there is not much incentive to default as it will damage its profit over the long term.
63. Two points were raised namely that food safety should be outside of certification. Could aquaculture include food safety and if so, how will this impact management of the scheme. The second point is that the benefit of the scheme has to be shared by the producer and the society as a whole. How do we enable this? Firstly, regarding the benefits. Social benefits and private benefits are different. Society benefits as a whole, so more public subsidies might be appropriate. FAO has studied how much countries invest in fisheries management and as a percentage of the value of the gross revenue of the catch; Asia is much lower compared to the world average (around 1–2 percent compared with 35 percent). It is clear therefore that countries not invest enough in fisheries management in the Asian region. The current discussion concerns apparent high cost of certification, yet this is actually a fraction of the real management cost.

Social dimensions of ecolabels on fisheries and aquaculture: how can coastal communities benefit?

Sebastian Mathew (International Collective in Support of Fishworkers)

64. The presentation looked at what could possibly be undertaken in the realms of labelling and certification from a bottom up perspective, building upon the strengths, not the weaknesses, of marine fisheries in the region. After taking a look at various types of first, second and third party certification schemes as well as mandatory food safety schemes, the presentation looked at why ecolabelling has limited chances of success in the short run and spelt out what could possibly be done by APFIC member countries in the realms of labelling and certification.
65. In the realms of capture fisheries, a third party certification might apply to a particular fish and fish products based on it, as being originating from a well managed fishery and subscribing to chain of custody, as in the case of MSC. There are certification schemes to certify fish originating from fishing vessels registered under the auspices of a regional fisheries management organization. Similarly, there are certification schemes to discriminate against fishing vessels that are not recognized by the association of producers.
66. Mandatory labels, in addition to food and hygiene safety standards, for fish production would also include certifying that the turtles/dolphin/protected species are not harmed in the process of

catching the fish for the export market, and that fish in question does not contain traces of heavy metals above permitted levels.

67. First and second party certification could apply to sustainable fishing method (as in the case of line fishers of Breton, France, for example) or to claiming that a fisheries management system is in place, although it may not certify to the effectiveness of management measures. The fish production could also be certified as originating from unpolluted waters, again, as in the case of Breton fishers who certify their clams and scallops are originating from cleaner coastal waters. Another possible first party certification is of fish as being caught by traditional fishers who have long history of association with the fishery. Fisheries that are dependent on traditional knowledge, fish caught by traditional fishers and fish that are processed, especially by women using traditional techniques, can thus be certified.
68. At the level of fish processing, geographic indications are recognized (as in the case of fish sauce produced by women processors in Phu Quoc Island, Viet Nam).
69. In the realms of social labelling, it was proposed that third party certification of fish products could be based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, that working and living conditions of fishers on board fishing vessels are adequately safeguarded. Similarly, social labelling can be resorted to certifying working and living conditions in aquaculture operations.
70. The poor status of commercially important fisheries of Asia, especially poor state of management of fish stocks, may not permit Asian fisheries to benefit from ecolabelling schemes in the short run, it was argued. Moreover, costs of certification and establishing chains of custody would be onerous, especially for artisanal and small-scale fishers.
71. Considering the diversity of fish culture in the region, innovative labelling initiatives would help fishing communities to market their fish and fish products at the national, regional and international level. The Asian region has a wide variety of processed fish such as smoked crab (India) and boiled anchovies (Thailand), and it was argued that geographic indications can be one way to add value to local production and processing in the national, regional and international seafood market. It was also proposed that there should be an attempt to compile examples of such fishing and fish processing methods in the region as well as fish products from such fisheries in the region that could be considered for recognition under geographic indications.
72. Instead of certification of fisheries, it was proposed that Asian countries, in the short run, should invest in initiatives to label selective fishing gear and practices, traditional ecological knowledge systems, and age-old fish processing techniques and products, and thus valorize coastal fishing communities in the region, with the participation of fishing communities, fishers' cooperatives and trade unions, as a precursor to moving towards certification schemes if deemed necessary.
73. The importance of developing innovative and flexible labelling and certification schemes – social, environmental, ecological, or cultural – that are built upon the comparative advantage of Asian fisheries such as traditional knowledge, sustainable fishing methods and unique fishery products is important. As far as markets for labelled fish is concerned, it was highlighted that it was important to consider not only south-north trade but perhaps more importantly, the importance of south-south trade amongst people who share similar culture and cherish more or less identical values.

Discussion

74. It was questioned if social responsibility is a more important issue for small-scale fisheries or if there should be options for supporting small-scale fisheries. It was replied that there is no substitute

for good fisheries management. With labelling, anyone can set up labelling, whilst the government must be responsible for the fisheries management. An example in the UK is the Seafish responsible fishing scheme, where individual vessels are certified based on their environmental awareness and management. This is a cheap but effective approach to improving the environmental performance at fleet level. It can be easily replicated through ‘training of trainers’ approach for coaching and auditing.

THEME II: NATIONAL STATUS OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATION IN ASIA–PACIFIC

75. The 13 member countries represented at the expert workshop provided summaries of the status of certification schemes in capture fisheries and aquaculture in their national context. The presentations were made available on the APFIC web site (www.apfic.org) together with some executive summaries provided by member countries. Member countries had also prepared posters for the expert workshop which were presented at the poster session in the afternoon/evening on Day One. The member countries at the meeting were: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

THEME III: AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATION

Guidelines for aquaculture certification

Rohana Subasinghe, Lahsen Ababouch, Simon Funge-Smith and Jesper Clausen (FAO)

76. The presentation provided the background to developing the guidelines and elaborated on the contents of the guidelines. The contents include: scope, principles, general considerations, terms and definitions, minimum substantive requirements and criteria, procedural and institutional aspects, setting of standards, accreditation, and certification.
77. Recently a set of international principles for sustainable shrimp aquaculture have been developed and welcomed by FAO member countries at the FAO Committee on Fisheries Sub-Committee on Aquaculture which was held in September 2007 in New Delhi, India. The International Principles have been developed by the Consortium on Shrimp Farming and the Environment, which consists of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP/GPA), the World Bank (WB) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Based on these internationally accepted principles together with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries FAO has started to develop FAO guidelines for aquaculture certification. The Sub-Committee commented that the emergence of a wide range of certification schemes and accreditation bodies was creating confusion amongst producers and consumers alike and stated that there was a need for more globally accepted norms for aquaculture production, which could provide more guidance and serve as a basis for improved harmonization and facilitate mutual recognition and equivalence of such certification schemes.
78. In response to the recommendations of the Aquaculture Sub-committee (ASC) of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), FAO and NACA have initiated to draft a set of Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification. This has so far resulted in the forming of a secretariat between FAO and NACA and two expert workshops and the development of a draft document on Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification.

Opportunities and challenges of certification in aquaculture for the APFIC region

Flavio Corsin (APFIC Consultant)

79. The presentation provided a general coverage of aquaculture certification schemes and associated schemes which may have relevance to aquaculture certification. There seems to be an increasing demand and willingness to pay for sustainable aquaculture products. The main areas currently covered by certification schemes are environmental and social sustainable aquaculture development and food safety. The main trends in aquaculture certification are an increasing number of schemes, an increasing number of commodities covered by schemes, increasing scope of standards (social, environment; food safety; trade), and they are all driven by an increasing demand for certified products.
80. It was concluded that there was an increasing trend in the number of certification schemes and the number of commodities that are covered. There is also an increase in the scope of the standards being set with respect to social, environmental as well as food safety aspects. There are still niche certification schemes but there is a trend towards larger market (main stream) certification. Often the standards are demanding for the producers and the processors. This could be a reason for the fact that currently most certified farms are large-scale. There are no certification schemes directly addressing small-scale producers who contribute to the main production.
81. Voluntary certification is a business decision by the involved farmer or farmer group have to make taking into consideration costs and benefits. Is there a premium price, is there a market and can it be accessed after certification? There is already a tendency that better farmers are seeking certification to “document” they are better. Looking at markets it should be noted that it is expected that the demand for fisheries products will rise by 40 million tonnes in 2030. It can only be recommended to get certified if there really is a clear market demand.
82. If certification of aquaculture products target true sustainability the approaches used for aquaculture certification should include: Multi-stakeholders participation and be consensus and performance based. The schemes should be focused on key impacts from aquaculture and if possible local/regional certifiers should be used. It might be a solution to certify areas instead of only individual farms and hence make sustainability and certification a shared responsibility.

Food safety, trade and aquaculture

Lahsen Ababouch, Simon Funge-Smith and Jesper Clausen (FAO)

83. Food safety and quality are very important when dealing with seafood products both from fisheries and from aquaculture. The principles of achieving harmonization of standards and equivalency in food control systems and the use of scientifically-based standards are embodied in two binding agreements of the WTO: the Agreement on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and the Agreement on technical barriers to trade (TBT). The SPS agreement confirms the right of WTO member countries to apply measures necessary to protect human, animal and plant life and health. The objective of the TBT Agreement is to prevent the use of national or regional technical requirements, or standards in general, as unjustified technical barriers to trade. The agreement covers standards relating to all types of products including industrial products and quality requirements for foods (except requirements related to SPS measures).
84. FAO’s normative work in food safety and quality is focused on food standards linked to the Codex Alimentarius and developed in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), and related capacity-building. Codex Alimentarius includes standards for all principal foods (whether processed, semi-processed or raw) for distribution to the consumer, with provisions related to food hygiene, food additives, pesticide residues, contaminants, labelling, presentation, methods of

analysis and sampling. The Codex Secretariat, housed in the FAO Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN), has primary responsibility for normative work on food safety. When dealing with certification it is important to focus on things not already covered by existing legislation.

85. It is important to keep focus of what it is we are trying to achieve with certification. The main issue is to improve product safety and improve transparency. This will improve consumer confidence and that will be a benefit for the producers. It is important to keep in mind that certification have to be efficient and cost effective. Main principles are to keep the schemes regulatory for the sector and market driven.
86. The conclusion is that it is crucial to ensure a level playing field both internationally and regionally when it comes to trade and certification should help in that matter, not make obstacles for trade. At the same time certification should be cost efficient and it should be clearly defined who will bear costs and who will enjoy the benefits. Certification schemes should not only focus on the consumer benefits and their requirements but also on the producers and their farm management practices.

Certification and collaborative supply chains in the agricultural sector

Jean-Joseph Cadilhon (FAO)

87. Industrialized countries have seen a strong growth in demand for high-value foods such as fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. Many developing countries have taken advantage of their cost- and climate-competitiveness to supply such produce to consumers in developed countries. This strategy at first brought major returns on investment for agribusinesses exporting such high-value produce. However, recent studies show that operating margins have been reduced because of intense competition, as detailed below.
88. Consumer demand has also changed in developing countries and in Asia in particular. With income growth and urbanization, and demographic, cultural and social changes in consumer preferences and eating habits, increasing travel and booming tourism, demand for new products is being put onto the domestic marketing systems. International supermarket chains and local supermarkets have also developed their store area and market share of food. These changes provide opportunities for agribusinesses to increase the added-value of their produce, although intense competition is driving margins down.
89. National governments have encouraged this trend towards higher-quality agricultural products through national quality assurance schemes such as good agricultural practices (GAP), good manufacturing practices (GMP) and organic agriculture. However, linking these national quality assurance schemes with private sector-led initiatives is proving difficult. The latter are increasingly dictating processes that must be used by producers and processors if they wish to gain access to domestic and international high-value or niche market chains. Such private quality initiatives include some GAP schemes (JGAP from Japan, ThaiGAP in Thailand), standards set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), fair-trade systems, British Retail Consortium (BRC) standards, International Food Standard (IFS) standards and GLOBALGAP (formerly EUREPGAP). Participation in these private quality assurance schemes generally entails some independent third-party verification process known as certification. The certification business is growing as a result in Asia with international and local players competing to provide the best certification services needed by agribusinesses in the region.
90. Independent peer-reviewed empirical research studying the impact of certification on smallholders is scarce because of the lack of data available when researching the private standards involved. FAO has conducted a few studies focusing on GLOBALGAP and organic products. Preliminary results show that labour- and land-intensive farming systems allow more remunerative smallholder

participation in high-value chains. Grouping small farmers into formal or informal entities helps them share the investment costs of converting to more demanding production systems and shouldering the certification costs themselves.

91. The actual costs of certification are generally low in relative terms, being only 7 percent, on average, of the on-going costs linked to practising organic agriculture. Obtaining certification does not only open market opportunities, it also places smallholders into a feeling of ownership of the quality assurance scheme and enhances their self-confidence as a group or community. Although some quality assurance schemes like GLOBALGAP require expensive investments into farm infrastructure and laboratory analyses, the main hurdles to smallholder farmers being able to benefit fully from certification are organizational and educational. It is essential to develop producers' knowledge about the quality assurance scheme and its goals and to strengthen their skills in complying with the scheme. An appropriate enabling environment is thus needed to help smallholder farmers grasp the benefits improved quality will bring to them and the importance of innovation to respond to the changing demands of consumer markets.

WORKING GROUPS

92. The participants were divided into two working groups namely; 1) Fisheries certification issues and 2) Aquaculture certification issues. The two groups were tasked with developing an action plan and recommendations for APFIC members and the APFIC Secretariat on steps to implement the actions, in the context of certification of capture fisheries and aquaculture. To focus the discussions in the working groups it was recommended to focus on not more than five issues in each group. The working groups were asked to give comments and recommendations for each of the issues identified.

Working Group 1 on Fisheries

93. It is widely recognized that fisheries management is underfunded in the Asia–Pacific region, and the workshop agreed that environmental and social certification offers an effective approach to identifying deficiencies in fisheries management and practical solutions to address them.
94. Small-scale fisheries have particular potential as being sustainable and socially-equitable, especially if linked to co-management arrangements. However, the certification of small-scale fisheries offers some unique challenges and is vulnerable to negative interactions from external operations particularly when regulation is weak and cannot protect inshore or small-scale fisheries.
95. The workshop recognized that small-scale fisheries can be certified, especially through innovative adaptations of certification methods (e.g. incorporating traditional knowledge and non-data intensive approaches, etc.). The workshop noted that small-scale fisheries might also benefit from other initiatives, such as first or second party verification or possibly branding. However, it was strongly emphasized that non-ecolabel/non-third party approaches run the risk of driving unsustainable practices, if they are not closely associated with fisheries management objectives and a degree of monitoring.
96. The workshop recognized that government and regional organizations as well as the private sector can all support the entry of fisheries into certification schemes. Indeed it is clear that fisheries are less of a driving force for certification than these other bodies at the moment, possibly due to the lack of immediate/apparent benefits accruing to them. It was emphasized that long-term sustainability will require the move towards consumers bearing more of the costs than they do presently and more effective transfer of benefits to producers.

97. The workshop acknowledged the need to build capacity in the region to identify and promote the certification of sustainable fisheries. There is also a need to support the national capacity to implement the FAO guidelines for ecolabelling of fisheries products in order to ensure a harmonized approach to certification and its use as a tool to improve fisheries management.

Recommendations

98. At national level, there is a need for APFIC members establish a strategy for rolling out certification as both a market development tool as well as one to use certification methodologies to target fisheries management interventions. The national strategy should clearly distinguish mandatory food safety issues from other desirable fisheries management objectives that may be voluntary in nature.
99. As part of the above strategy, APFIC members should conduct a national ‘stock takes’ into the status of the management of their key fisheries. This should identify those fisheries with either good management, or those with weak management but with a potential to improve. These could be assessed either (i) as fisheries with potential for market-driven ecolabelling or, (ii) fisheries that might not require an ecolabel but would benefit from a holistic assessment of its fisheries management strengths and weaknesses to prioritize future management initiatives and work planning.
100. Recognizing the general inadequate allocation of resources for fisheries management, it is recommended that there should be targeting of resources or incentives for sustainable practice, thus rewarding those with a will to move towards good management. The stock-taking of fisheries could be used to mobilize and direct resources towards those fisheries where there is the will to manage.
101. It was noted that small-scale fisheries which had (i) existing sustainable management methods and (ii) a recognized and distinguishable product, may not be able to undergo full third party certification. In such cases, there may be opportunities for branding and/or labelling of their products. However, such approached may also drive unsustainable practices if there were no associated fisheries or environmental management objectives and associated monitoring.

Working Group 2 on Aquaculture

102. The APFIC region accounts for a significant proportion of global aquaculture production and represents a wealth of technical knowledge on sustainable aquaculture which is of relevance to certification. This capacity has prompted the development of a number of national certification schemes which are tailored to the socio-economic status of producer’s especially small-scale producers.
103. The working group on aquaculture identified six main issues of particular importance for aquaculture certification in the APFIC region. Throughout the discussions there were a wish to see more regional involvement in setting certification schemes.
104. Small-scale producers where considered as a main issue for the region. It was discussed how small-scale farmers can adapt to certification or how certification can adapt to the small-scale sector. It is clear that there are difficulties in compliance and that there is a need to ensure benefits for small-scale producers with limited financial resources and knowledge. It was concluded that there should be recognition of the regions traditional aquaculture practices and knowledge. There was a need to ensure better access to information and technology for the small-scale producers.
105. It was mentioned that there are a large number of especially voluntary certification schemes, and to some extent there seems to be an overlap in scope with mandatory schemes. The working group

agreed that the present number of certification schemes is troublesome for producers and they are potentially confusing for consumers. A higher degree of harmonization and equivalence can reduce confusion among producers and consumers. At the same time there is a potential cost saving through harmonization both for producers and consumers. It was recognized that equivalence might be difficult to reach whereas harmonization might be reachable.

106. Limited capacity of small-scale producers both economic and technical knowledge. Is a constraint and it was noted that within the APFIC members there are different levels of capacity. Regional networking should be encouraged and support from both member countries and funds from donors should be approached. There should be capacity building on better management practices (including BMP, GAP, CoC) and certification issues related to: i) schemes, ii) requirements, iii) standards, iv) auditing processes, and v) monitoring.
107. The working group generally considered certification and the changes needed in order to comply as expensive especially with reference to the small-scale producers. Often certification schemes do not offer premium prices especially for the producers. It should also be recognized that there can be a considerable cost associated with establishing the facilities to perform tests relevant to compliance with certification schemes. At the same time it was acknowledged that certification can provide benefits to environment and local communities.
108. The working group noted the need for more regional involvement in especially setting the standards. The region account for 80 percent of the global aquaculture production and there is a notable technical knowledge and expertise available which is of relevance for aquaculture certification. The region already has a number of national certification schemes operating. It was also commented that an increasing number of certification schemes from outside the region are operating within the region. These certification schemes should acknowledge the cultural and socio-economic setting in the region which might be different compared the countries or regions from which some of the international certification schemes originate.
109. The working group underlined that there was a need to involve all stakeholders who are potentially affected by aquaculture practices. It was noted that all involved stakeholders, especially small-scale fisheries and directly impacted communities, have a role to play in the development of certification standards and procedures.

Recommendations

110. The Workshop recommended that this capacity and experience would be used by APFIC members to develop a regional certification scheme, which could be a harmonization with other schemes operating in the region. The Workshop emphasized that any schemes developed or operating in the region should be in compliance with the forthcoming FAO Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification.
111. In view of the predominance of small-scale producers in the APFIC region and their constraints in complying with many certification schemes, the Workshop recommended that schemes operating in the region should be developed and/or revised to be beneficial to producers, allow for cluster certification and allow for incremental improvement against targets.
112. The Workshop recognized that the costs associated with compliance with most certification schemes, which are typically not offset by premium prices and/or other clearly documented benefits. The Workshop recommended that APFIC members promote the development and/or revision of aquaculture certification schemes in order to ensure that benefits are maximized and cost controlled whilst maintaining compliance with the FAO guidelines. To achieve this objective the development and accreditation of both private and government certification bodies should be promoted.

113. The Workshop recognized that aquaculture sustainability is a responsibility shared by a broad range of stakeholders. Therefore, the Workshop recommended that certification should be developed in compliance with international norms on development of standards, transparency and the FAO guidelines, particularly with respect to including directly affected stakeholders.
114. The Workshop recognized that most APFIC countries have significant resourcing and capacity constraints, at the producer level and within fishery institutions to implementation certification. The Workshop recommended that APFIC members support capacity building on better management practices and certification issues in addition to developing mechanisms that facilitate capacity building (e.g. financial, insurance based).

WORKSHOP CLOSURE

115. In the Workshop closing remarks Mr Simon Funge-Smith thanked the participants for their active and valuable contribution to the Workshop. He underlined the importance of taking the recommendations back to the member governments and actively work on implementing the recommendations. The Workshop was successful and created a good forum for APFIC members to discuss informally issues surrounding capture fisheries and aquaculture certification issues. On behalf of FAO and APFIC he also thanked the Government of Viet Nam for their excellent arrangements hosting the Workshop.
116. On behalf of the Government of Viet Nam and the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector, Dr Pham Trong Yen thanked the participants and APFIC/FAO for choosing Viet Nam as a host country. Certification in aquaculture and fisheries is an important issue for Viet Nam and the recommendations from the Workshop are useful for both Viet Nam and for other countries in the region.

ANNEX 1: WORKSHOP AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

APFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CERTIFICATION SCHEMES FOR CAPTURE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, 18–20 September 2007

Day 1, 18 th September 2007	
Time	Activity
08.30 – 09.00	Registration
09.00 – 09.15	Welcome remarks MARD (Fisheries/Aquaculture) APFIC Chair (representative) APFIC/FAO Simon Funge-Smith
09.15 – 09.20	Election of chair
09.20 – 09.30	Group photo
09.30 – 10.00	Coffee/Tea
10.00 – 10.15	Introduction to the consultation APFIC/FAO Simon Funge-Smith
THEME I – Fisheries Certification in Asia–Pacific	
10.15 – 11.00	Fisheries Certification: A study on Pros and Cons Tim Huntington, Poseidon Consultants
11.00 – 11.45	Fisheries Certification in Asia–Pacific: A certification schemes perspective Duncan Leadbitter and Kozo Ishii, MSC
11.45 – 12.30	Product marketing and market access through use of labels – opportunities and potential restrictions Sudari Pawiro, INFOFISH
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 14.30	Ecolabelling in small-scale fisheries Magnus Torell and Martin Bjerner, SEAFDEC/Sida
14.30 – 15.00	Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries Rolf Willmann, FAO
15.00 – 15.30	Social Dimensions of Ecolabels on Fisheries and Aquaculture: How can Coastal Communities Benefit? Sebastian Mathew, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)
15.30 – 16.00	Coffee/Tea
THEME II – National status of fisheries and aquaculture certification in Asia–Pacific	
16.00 – 17.00	Country statements on fisheries certification schemes (Continued) APFIC countries
17.00 – 17.30	Wrap-up day 1 – plenary discussion
17.30 – 18.00	Meeting of “Friends of the Chair”
18.00 – 21.00	Poster Session and Reception at Hotel Continental hosted by FAO

Day 2, 19 th September 2007	
Time	Activity
THEME III – Aquaculture certification	
08.30 – 09.15	Opportunities and challenges of certification in aquaculture for the APFIC region Flavio Corsin, APFIC consultant
09.15 – 10.00	FAO/NACA Guidelines for aquaculture certification Simon Funge-Smith, FAO
10.00 – 10.30	Food safety, trade and aquaculture Lahsen Ababouch and Jesper Clausen, FAO
<i>10.30 – 11.00</i>	<i>Coffee/Tea</i>
WORKING GROUPS	
11.00 – 11.10	Short introduction to the working groups The working groups will be tasked with the following questions and expected to develop some consideration by the plenary Jesper Clausen, FAO
11.10 – 12.30	<i>Working Groups session 1</i> <i>Working Group 1 (Fisheries Certification)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What priorities in the future will benefit from certification? • What types of certification or label offer the opportunities for the region? • How will certification affect trade within the region and does it have a role in domestic markets? • How can Regional organizations assist in addressing these issues? <i>Working Group 2 (Aquaculture Certification)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the regional issues relating to the process of developing global guidelines on aquaculture certification • What are the regional priority areas which need to be addressed • What are the steps that countries could take, what is the role of regional organizations (NACA/APFIC/INFOFISH/etc.) in this?
<i>12.30 – 14.00</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00 – 15.30	Working groups (continue)
<i>15.30 – 16.00</i>	<i>Coffee/Tea</i>
16.00 – 17.00	Working groups (continue)
17.00 – 17.30	Meeting of “Friends of the Chair”

Day 3, 20 th September 2007	
Time	Activity
WORKING GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND PLENARY DISCUSSIONS	
09.00 – 09.30	Latest developments in certification within the agricultural sector Jean-Joseph Cadilhon, FAO
09.30 – 10.00	Working groups prepare presentations to plenary
10.00 – 10.30	Presentation from Working Group 1 (Fisheries)
10.30 – 11.00	<i>Coffee/Tea</i>
11.00 – 11.30	Presentation from Working Group 2 (Aquaculture)
11.30 – 12.00	Plenary discussion
12.00 – 12.30	Friends of the chair session to draft meeting conclusions/recommendations and strategy from plenary discussion
12.30 – 14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00 – 15.30	Workshop recommendations and actions session (Facilitated)
15.30 – 15.45	Closing of workshop

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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