

TCP/PAK/3005 "Support to Fishery Sector Policy and Strategy Formulation in Pakistan" – From participatory policy formulation to coordinated implementation

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Since its signature in April 2005 by the FAO Director General and inception workshop in Lahore in May 2005 (see FAN No.34), TCP/PAK/3005 "Support to Fishery Sector Policy and Strategy Formulation in Pakistan" has made substantial progress in the implementation of its activities. One could even say that it has gone further than anticipated in the achievement of its objectives.

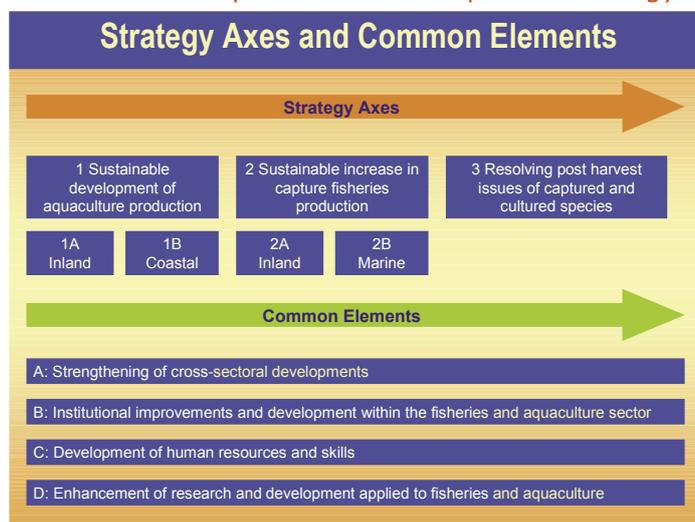
Adopting an iterative and innovative participatory bottom-up process for the formulation of the Fishery sector (including aquaculture) Policy and Strategy, work started with elicitation of community needs in the four Provinces of Pakistan in August 2005, and culminated in a national workshop in June 2006 where the contents of Policy and Strategy document was endorsed by participants from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL), allied Ministries and provincial Departments and contributed to the detailed elaboration of an Implementation Plan for the policy. The progressive and iterative elaboration of the Policy and Strategy combined inputs from a wide range of stakeholders (fishers, private investors, NGOs, research institutes, irrigation authorities, District authorities, Provincial Finance, Planning, Fisheries etc. Departments) and, as such, reflected the range of concerns and possible solutions to develop the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the country. **Policy aims** are to *increase the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to: 1. national economic growth, 2. poverty alleviation and 3. food security.* The **Strategy objective** is to *increase national fish supply based on sustainable production and improved marketing of aquatic products.* The means by which this objective will be reached are reflected in the Strategy "axes" and "common elements" (Figure 1). The endorsed Policy and Strategy is about to be presented to the Cabinet for approval.

The May 2006 workshop was immediately followed up by a high-level meeting chaired by the Secretary of MINFAL and laid out clearly the next steps towards the implementation of the policy and

strategy. Critically, a thorough institutional analysis to define institutional arrangements necessary for the implementation of the policy was requested and subsequently carried out. Capacity building needs were clearly defined to ensure that fisheries institutions would be able to carry out policy implementation tasks. These proposals were then presented to participants during a national workshop held in Islamabad in October 2006.

Given the Government of Pakistan's eagerness for implementing activities laid out in the Strategy implementation plan, a PC1 document was drafted upon its request. PC1 formulation is the formal process through which project proposals are elaborated and sent to the Planning Commission of Pakistan for funding. The draft document was discussed with federal and provincial agencies during the October workshop. In addition to concrete initiatives the PC1 shall be used to fund three kinds of administrative bodies, which have been proposed to carry forward the implementation of the new Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Strategy, namely: a **National Fisheries Policy Implementation Committee (NFPIC)** working closely with an upgraded **Federal Fisheries Cell (FFC)** and Provincial (or Area) **Fisheries and**

Figure 1. Axes and Common Elements of Pakistan's Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Strategy



Aquaculture Promotion Boards (PFAPB). Once approved by the Planning Commission, it will be a means by which activities included in the Strategy implementation plan will be executed, and by which institutional strengthening will be carried out. The draft PC1 will be submitted to the Planning Commission in early 2007.

In addition, upon request of the Government of Pakistan a first UTF² mission was fielded in May 2005 to develop a project on Agro-Processing and Agri-Business Strategy Development and Knowledge Sharing including a component on aquaculture where 7 Sub-projects have been recommended (see FAN No. 34). Sub-project 1 (National Aquaculture Strategy) of this UTF has now been addressed by this TCP; while Sub-project 2 (Master Plan for Shrimp Culture Development in the Coastal Areas of Sindh and Baluchistan Provinces) and Sub-project 7 (Marketing Study to Increase Value-Addition and Marketing of Pakistani Aquaculture Products) have since been refined and are now included in the current PC1 draft document under finalisation³. An addition component of the PC1 includes the provision of an Advisor to guide the implementation of the Fisheries and Aquaculture policy. There are direct linkages between these three components and the objectives and activities of the PC1.

The closing date of the TCP has been extended to the 31st of March 2007 to allow the process of PC1 finalisation and approval by the Planning Commission to be completed. However, to date, two factors have made this TCP a special learning experience. These are:

□ The bottom-UP process undertaken for the formulation of the policy. Such a process had never been undertaken in Pakistan. It encountered some resistance from Government officials in its initial phase, but through perseverance and relentless efforts from national counterparts, minds were gradually changed, to the extent that full support was given to the process until its completion at the national level during the May 2006 workshop and high-level meeting.

□ The fact that now, all initiatives undertaken are developed and fall under the umbrella of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Strategy and as such, contribute to the concrete implementation of the contents of this document. Failure to implement the contents of the policy documents is often held against planning efforts as they bear few concrete impacts. Extension of the TCP will allow it



Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Strategy formulation process initiated in inland fishing communities where high poverty levels are encountered.....



....through to district-level consultations...

to go further than anticipated, to act as the catalyst for forthcoming projects funded by the Government of Pakistan itself and international donors to implement the policy, and to closely respond to the its need for coordination and concrete actions towards fisheries and aquaculture development.

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²UTF–Unilateral Trust Funds–are projects financed by recipient countries from their own resources or loans, grants by International Financial Institutions. FAO provides technical assistance to the delivery of such projects.

³Including these three UTF components in the PC1 proposal is a way to ensure that Government funds will be set aside for UTF implementation.