



STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING INFORMATION
ON STATUS AND TRENDS OF CAPTURE
FISHERIES



**THE ROLE OF REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES AND THE CWP IN
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAO STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING
INFORMATION ON STATUS AND TRENDS OF CAPTURE FISHERIES
(STRATEGY-STF)**

Workshop report

FishCode-STF Project Working Paper 2005/3

**28 February - 1 March 2005
Copenhagen, Denmark**

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Summary

The FAO/CWP workshop on the role of Regional Fishery Bodies and the CWP in Implementation of the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries (Strategy-STF) was hosted by ICES on 28 February -1 March 2005 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The objective workshop was to identify the roles that RFBs and CWP could play in the implementation of the Strategy-STF.

Participants representing RFBs and FAO discussed areas of common interest with the Strategy-STF, possible partnership activities, implementation arrangement for partnership activities and the needs for capacity building in RFBs.

The Workshop made the following recommendations with regard to future partnership activities:

- The FishCode-STF Project and FAO should assist RFBs in increasing the awareness of the importance of the implementation of the STF Strategy.
- The FishCode-STF Project and FAO, together with the RFBs, should stress the importance of and promote actions on transparent and complete national data collection of fisheries.
- The FishCode-STF Project should cooperate with RFBs on the carrying out of inventories of data collection systems and status of stocks, in particular in supporting their contribution to FIRMS.
- FishCode-STF Project should seek collaboration with interested RFBs for the development of monitoring systems for small-scale fisheries in developing countries. All RFBs may assist with the identification of expertise for technical assistance.
- The FishCode-STF Project should consider developing guidelines for the establishment of data exchange protocols based on the CWP handbook on fisheries statistical standards.

Introduction

1. In the 20th CWP Session in 2003, the possible role of CWP and RFBs in the implementation of the Strategy-STF was discussed. The CWP had participated in the Technical Consultation on Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries in March 2002 and RFBs were involved in the development of the Strategy-STF. The meeting agreed that CWP should support the implementation of the Strategy-STF within the framework of its mandate. At the Intersessional Meeting of CWP Agencies in February 2004, it was agreed to organise the RFB-STF Workshop to discuss in more detail the roles of CWP and RFBs in the implementation of the Strategy-STF.
2. In order to assist the implementation of the Strategy-STF, a multilateral project was formulated under the FAO FishCode Programme, the *FishCode-STF Project*. The Project became operational in November 2004. A major objective of the project is to support the implementation of the Strategy-STF.
3. The FAO/CWP workshop on the role of Regional Fishery Bodies and the CWP in Implementation of the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries (Strategy-STF) was hosted by ICES on 28 February -1 March 2005 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The objective of the workshop was to identify the roles that RFBs and CWP could play in the implementation of the Strategy-STF. It was expected that a general framework for the participation and cooperation of RFBs would be outlined and that specific areas for partnership activities undertaken by the RFBs would be identified.
4. The workshop was attended by ten participants from RFBs and FAO. The list of participants is included in Annex A and the Workshop working paper in Annex B
5. The agenda of the workshop as adopted is given in Annex C and included a short presentation on the Strategy-STF and the FAO FishCode-STF Project by the Project Technical Manager followed by discussions on the activities of the participating RFBs on their work programmes and areas of common interest with the Strategy-STF. Other agenda items were the identification of possible partnership activities and requirements with regard to their implementation arrangements and a discussion on the needs for capacity building in RFBs

The Workshop

Discussions

6. In his presentation, the FishCode-STF Technical Manager summarised the current priority activities of the Project, i.e. inventories of data collection systems and of the status of fish stocks, the development of monitoring systems for small-scale fisheries, and capacity building focusing on developing countries and regions. It was explained, however, that although the FishCode-STF Project focuses on developing countries, the STF Strategy is global in scope.

7. The RFB representatives made brief statements advising the workshop of their activities relevant to the STF-Strategy and the work of the FishCode-STF Project. It was noted that all organisations were involved in various aspects of improving data and information but that reference was rarely formally made to the STF-Strategy.

8. The workshop discussed the importance of how data are collected and how the use of different sources often gives different sets of data. Most RFBs rely on official national data collected by their member states and other scientific sources. These national data are compiled and sometimes, based on assessments and the results from complementary surveys, corrected for scientific purposes by RFBs. This results in the existence of different data sets that are not always comparable or compatible. The need for transparency in data handling was noted but the workshop did not discuss further how to resolve the issue. However, it was suggested that FAO and the FishCode-STF Project could assist in increasing the awareness in RFB member states about the STF-Strategy and the importance of good quality data and information.

9. The importance of developing monitoring systems for small-scale fisheries and the current lack of reliable data on the activities of the sector was highlighted by the workshop. Among those RFBs present at the workshop, IATTC, ICCAT and SEAFDEC expressed interest in cooperation with the FishCode-STF Project on the implementation of this important issue of the Strategy-STF. It was also expected that other RFBs not present would be interested in the subject matter.

10. The workshop noted that there are different concerns and issues in data rich and data poor organisations. It was also recognised that different methodologies for data collection and handling need to be used in different situations and in different environments. Hence, with regard to the development of monitoring systems for small-scale fisheries, particularly in a developing country context, it was felt that it would not always be advisable to transfer technology directly from existing data collection systems. Nevertheless, also RFBs not directly concerned with these aspects of small-scale fisheries felt that expertise may be available within their science networks and offered to assist in identifying such expertise.

11. The meeting discussed the three proposals for partnership activities presented in the working paper prepared for the workshop (see Annex B). With regard to the first proposal – *Inventory of existing fishery data collection systems, fishery resources and fisheries and incorporation of results into FIGIS* – the workshop welcomed the cooperation. The meeting noted that all RFBs present already contribute to this work by their participation in FIRMS.

12. On the proposal *Development of criteria, methods and processes for ensuring the quality and security of information on status and trends*, it was agreed that the FishCode STF Project should look into the possibility of developing guidelines for the establishment of data exchange protocols based on the CWP handbook on fisheries statistical standards. It was felt that CWP would welcome such an initiative and that the establishment of working groups of experts could be considered once a more specific proposal for the activity has been elaborated.

13. With regard to *expanding the scope of information on status and trends of fisheries to include economic, social and environmental aspects and allow for the incorporation of ecosystem considerations into fisheries management*, it was found that many RFBs work towards implementing an eco-system approach without considering all aspects as defined in the FAO guidelines. Only a few CWP members collect socio-economic data, e.g. Eurostat, GFCM, OECD and SEAFDEC. It was also noted that the focus of the FishCode-STF Project is on data poor situations where an ecosystem approach may be difficult to implement.

14. On the issue of how RFB and FishCode-STF Project partnership activities should be organised, the workshop concluded that a flexible approach should be followed and that arrangements should be made on a case-by-case basis. While RFBs have to follow internal decision structures and protocols, no particular requirements were identified with regard to institutional arrangements. It was also noted that cooperation between the FishCode STF Project and RFBs could take place through the already existing institutional arrangement that the CWP represents.

15. The workshop agreed with the priorities established by the FishCode-STF Project that project activities should focus on areas where the needs are the most urgent, i.e. data poor situations in developing countries.

Conclusions and recommendations

16. The following recommendations were given with regard to future partnership activities:

- The FishCode-STF Project and FAO should assist RFBs in increasing the awareness of the importance of the implementation of the STF Strategy.
- The FishCode-STF Project and FAO, together with the RFBs, should stress the importance of and promote actions on transparent and complete national data collection of fisheries.
- The FishCode-STF Project should cooperate with RFBs on the carrying out of inventories of data collection systems and status of stocks, in particular in supporting their contribution to FIRMS.
- FishCode-STF Project should seek collaboration with interested RFBs for the development of monitoring systems for small-scale fisheries in developing countries. All RFBs may assist with the identification of expertise for technical assistance.
- The FishCode-STF Project should consider developing guidelines for the establishment of data exchange protocols based on the CWP handbook on fisheries statistical standards.

17. The participants of the Workshop expressed gratitude and appreciation to ICES for hosting this Workshop.

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Annex B: Workshop Working Paper

**The Role of Regional Fishery Bodies and the CWP in Implementation of
the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture
Fisheries (Strategy-STF)**

FAO FishCode-STF Project

January 2005

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APPENDIX I: **List of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs)**

ABBREVIATIONS¹

ACFR	Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
COFI	FAO Committee on Fisheries
CWP	Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Communities
FIGIS	FAO Fisheries Global Information System
FIRMS	Fishery Resources Monitoring System
GESAMP	Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Seas
IPOA	International Plan Of Action
IUU fishing	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RFB	Regional Fishery Body
Strategy-STF	Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

¹ See also Appendix I.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Responsible fisheries management has become a main concern to policy and decision makers recognising the increasing threats to ecosystem diversity and productivity and to the sustainable contribution of aquatic resources to the nutritional, economic and social well-being of the world's growing population. To give guidance to policy-makers, the "Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries" (CCRF) was developed by FAO and adopted by its Member States in 1995. Together with its Technical Guidelines and related International Plans of Action (IPOAs), the CCRF has become a widely accepted global standard defining principles and methods for developing and managing fisheries and aquaculture in a sustainable manner. In order to facilitate the implementation of the CCRF, FAO Fisheries Department set up a special programme for global partnerships promoting responsible fisheries: FishCode. The programme serves as a means through which partnership initiatives supporting the CCRF can be implemented drawing on the know-how and experience of FAO.

Guiding principles, however, are not enough for achieving responsible fisheries management. Sound decisions have to be based on accurate and relevant information and knowledge of fisheries and fishery resources. Based on recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR), a proposal was developed to improve the way fishery status and trends information is assembled and disseminated. The proposal was discussed in an FAO Technical Consultation in 2002 and the "Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries" (Strategy-STF) was adopted by the 25th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2003.

The Strategy-STF is a voluntary instrument that applies to all States and entities. Its overall objective is to provide a framework for the improvement of knowledge and understanding of fishery status and trends as a basis for fisheries policy-making and sustainable management. The Strategy-STF will be implemented through agreements between States, directly or through Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and arrangements, and FAO.

COFI at its 25th Session recognized the need for extra-budgetary support for implementation of the Strategy-STF and accordingly endorsed a proposal to develop a multilateral project under the FAO FishCode Programme as a means to accomplish this. Three Members have so far committed funds in support of the FishCode-STF Project and its first component – "Development of Inventories, Methodologies and Operational Guidelines" – became operational in November 2004.

The Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) and RFBs participated in the Technical Consultation in 2002. RFBs also contributed to the development of the Strategy-STF. In the 20th CWP Session in 2003, it was agreed that CWP would be prepared to facilitate the implementation of the Strategy-STF within the areas of its mandate. This agreement was confirmed at the Intersessional Meeting of CWP Agencies in February 2004. It was also agreed that a workshop should be held in conjunction with the next CWP Session in the beginning of March 2005 to discuss the role of RFBs in the implementation of the Strategy. Accordingly, a Workshop on "The Role of Regional Fishery Bodies in Implementation of the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of

Capture Fisheries” (RFB-STF Workshop) is being held in Copenhagen on 28 February – 1 March 2005.

Context of and outline the present report

The present report has been prepared for the *RFB-STF Workshop*, hosted by ICES in Copenhagen on 28 February – 1 March 2005. The purpose of the report is to serve as a background and reference document, giving a general overview of the role of RFBs in the implementation of the Strategy-STF, and as a discussion document with regard to possible collaboration between the FishCode-STF Project and the RFBs.

After this introductory chapter, the context and contents of the Strategy-STF are presented in chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the RFBs and their role in fisheries management and conservation. Chapter 4 discusses possible roles for the RFBs in implementing the Strategy-STF and suggests issues for discussion in the RFB-STF Workshop. Concluding remarks are found in Chapter 5 and a bibliography in Chapter 6.

A list of RFBs is included in Appendix I.

Expected outcome of the RFB-STF Workshop

The objective of the RFB-STF Workshop is to identify the roles that RFBs and CWP could play in the implementation of the Strategy-STF. It is expected that a general framework for the participation and cooperation of RFBs will be outlined and that specific areas for partnership activities undertaken by the RFBs will be identified.

The outcome of the Workshop will be presented to the 21th CWP Session held immediately after the Workshop on 1-4 March 2005.

IMPROVING INFORMATION ON STATUS AND TRENDS

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and FishCode

The CCRF is a voluntary instrument setting out principles and standards for responsible practices with regard to effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources within the context of a sustainable ecosystem and biodiversity. It covers fishing operations, processing and trade of fish and fishery products as well as aquaculture, fisheries research and fisheries under coastal area management. The CCRF is global in scope and is directed to all those concerned with the aquatic environment in relation to fisheries and aquaculture.

Within the framework of the CCRF, four IPOAs have been agreed upon². The Strategy-STF is another voluntary instrument within the CCRF framework. Moreover, the “Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas” (Compliance Agreement), adopted by the 27th Session of the FAO Conference, forms an integral part of the CCRF.

² IPOA for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries; IPOA for the Conservation and Management of Sharks; IPOA for the Management of Fishing Capacity; IPOA to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

The implementation of the CCRF is a complex and demanding task that takes place at several levels: global, regional, sub-regional and national. The FAO Fisheries Department promotes implementation and acts as a catalyst. A number of Technical Guidelines have been developed by the Department to support the implementation. Already when adopting the CCRF, the FAO Conference recommended that provisions should be made for “providing advice to developing countries in implementing the CCRF and for the elaboration of an Interregional Assistance Programme for external assistance aimed at supporting implementation of the CCRF”³. Accordingly, the FAO FishCode Programme was established as a special programme of global partnerships for responsible fisheries. The overall objective is to “to raise the economic, social and nutritional benefits obtained from the fisheries and aquaculture, especially in developing countries, through the adoption of responsible development, management and conservation practices, including improved institutional and legal arrangements.”⁴

The FishCode Programme is mainly funded through contributions from partner governments and organisations in combination with FAO Regular Programme resources. Its coordination unit is situated in FAO headquarters. FishCode components cover a wide range of activities related to the CCRF implementation, including the Strategy-STF Project.

The Strategy-STF

The need for good information on status and trends of fisheries is stated in the CCRF and in other international instruments concerning fisheries. Accurate and appropriate knowledge of fisheries and fishery resources, including socio-economic aspects, is a prerequisite for sound policy-making and responsible fisheries management and governance.

The Strategy-STF applies to the assembly and dissemination of information on fishery status and trends at the national, regional and global levels while data collection for research needs are established by other international fisheries instruments. Nevertheless, the Strategy-STF is expected to strengthen research indirectly through capacity building in developing countries.

The main focus of the Strategy-STF is fishery resources and the primary fisheries sector. It covers all capture fisheries in inland and marine waters and all types of fishing operations. However, it does not apply to aquaculture because of the different requirements of the sector.

The Strategy-STF was developed within the context of the CCRF and its main objective is “to provide a framework for the improvement of knowledge and understanding of fishery status and trends as a basis for fisheries policy making and management”⁵. Within the Strategy-STF, high priority is given to capacity building and the provision of technical assistance to developing countries. Furthermore, the particular requirements of the small-scale fisheries sector are emphasised because of its importance to food security and poverty reduction. The Strategy-STF supports the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation agreed on at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) by contributing better information for monitoring the time-bound goals set for fisheries, i.e. regarding the implementation of the IPOAs on IUU fishing and capacity, restoration of depleted stocks, application of an

³ 28th Conference of FAO, Resolution 4/95.

⁴ FishCode webpage www.fao.org/fi/projects/fishcode

⁵ Strategy-STF paragraph 12.

ecosystem approach, and the establishment of “representative networks” of marine protected areas⁶.

The Strategy-STF will be implemented by working cooperatively through agreements between States, RFBs and FAO. These arrangements will be established at different geographical levels and coordinated with the assistance of FAO. Whenever possible, use should be made of existing organisations for cooperation.

The Strategy-STF provides a list of required actions for the achievement of its objective. These actions cover different issues and considerations and can be summarised as follows:

- Developing countries needs for financial and technical assistance should be addressed and *capacity building* is necessary, both at national level and with regard to RFBs, to ensure their participation in the Strategy-STF.
- *Small-scale and multi-species* fisheries are often poorly monitored and appropriate methods should be developed for improving the information on these fisheries.
- The scope of the information collected should be expanded to include the effects of climatic, environment and socio-economic factors on fishery conservation and management in order to allow for the *incorporation of ecosystem considerations into fisheries management*. Indicators of sustainable development should also be developed.
- The Strategy-STF will be instrumental in the preparation of a complete *inventory of the world's fisheries and fish stocks*. Definitions, forms, methods and other tools have to be developed for carrying out such an inventory in the FAO Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS). A process for scientific oversight of the status and trends information should also be established.
- The *FAO Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS)* aims at providing policy-makers with reliable and timely information. It is based on collaboration with States contributing and accessing information. FIGIS will be an important support to the implementation of the Strategy-STF and States and RFBs are recommended to support its development.
- Criteria and methods should be developed to ensure the *quality and security of status and trends information*. These criteria and methods should comply with already agreed international standards and practices for data verification.
- Provision of data should be facilitated and *exchange of information on status and trends* should be promoted.
- *Working groups* of fisheries experts should be set up to assess the status and trends of fish stocks and fisheries and to promote quality and transparency of scientific information, including through the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS).
- The *sustainability* of data collection, analysis and reporting should be ensured and States should monitor their systems accordingly.

The FishCode-STF Project

In order to assist the implementation of the Strategy-STF, a multilateral project was formulated under the FAO FishCode Programme, the *FishCode-STF Project*. The Project became operational in November 2004. The development objective of the Project is the same as for the FishCode Programme, i.e. increased economic, social and nutritional benefits

⁶ FishCode webpage “Component Briefs” and FAO 2003.

obtained from fisheries, through the adoption of responsible fisheries management and resource conservation policies and practices.

The Project will support the implementation of the Strategy-STF globally but places special emphasis on capacity-building in developing countries and regions. The direct beneficiaries will be national fisheries statistical units, research institutes and fishery administrations who will have their capacities strengthened and enhanced in addition to having access to better information on status and trends. It is also expected that national and international actors at regional and global levels will benefit from improved information and, in some cases, capacity building.

The Project will implement the Strategy-STF through agreements between States, directly or through RFBs, and FAO. While the Project will work primarily with national administrations, it will also seek cooperation with other actors and bodies, e.g.:

- *Other components under the FishCode Programme umbrella and other projects involved in the implementation of the CCRF.*
The FishCode-STF Project training activities will, for example, be carried out in cooperation with the FishCode SIDS Project⁷ or with the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme⁸ as appropriate.
- *FIGIS-FIRMS*
The work of FIGIS-FIRMS includes stocks, resources and fisheries inventories and the development of standards⁹. The inventories to be carried out by the FishCode-STF Project will be based on methodologies developed by FIGIS-FIRMS.
- *RFBs and CWP*
The Project will seek partnerships with RFBs for facilitating the implementation of the Strategy-STF. RFBs could also support the implementation by giving support to their members, participating in relevant programmes, by adopting agreed standards and guidelines and by becoming partners of FIGIS. The CWP is concerned with international cooperation in the field of fishery statistics and interlinks the work of various RFBs.
- *Other international fishery-related organisations, advisory bodies and programmes*
As and when appropriate, cooperation will be sought with other organisations and programmes concerned with fisheries governance, for example, the ACFR, Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) and UNEP Regional Seas Programme.

Six guiding principles have been defined for the implementation arrangements:

- *Sustainability*
The arrangements for information assembly and dissemination should be viable in the long term.
- *Best scientific advice*
The quality of scientific information should be assured to the extent possible and the arrangements should contribute to best scientific advice.
- *Participation and cooperation*
The arrangements should allow all relevant participants to be included in the preparation, analysis and presentation of information.

⁷ Responsible Fisheries for Small Island Developing States, GCP/INT/823/JPN.

⁸ GCP/INT/735/UK.

⁹ FAO/FIGIS-FIRMS 2002.

- *Objectivity and transparency*
The arrangements should contribute to transparency and information uncertainties should be disclosed.
- *Timeliness*
Arrangements should result in the provision of information in a timely manner.
- *Flexibility*
Arrangements should be flexible and permit adjustments when needed to support fishery policy-making and management.

The Project will address the “Required actions” described in the Strategy-STF document, i.e.:

- Capacity-building in developing countries.
- Setting up a global inventory of fish stocks and fisheries.
- Development of data collection systems for small-scale and multi species fisheries.
- Development of criteria and methods for ensuring information quality and security.
- Development of arrangements for the provision and exchange of information.
- Support to and participation in the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS).
- Sustaining data collection and information systems.
- Expanding the scope of information on status and trends of fisheries, including the need to incorporate ecosystem considerations into fisheries management.
- Participation in working groups in assessing the status and trends of fisheries.

The FishCode-STF Project is designed to be implemented in two overlapping phases. The first component, “Development of inventories, methodologies and operational guidelines”, focuses on the normative framework. The second component, “Field training and implementation”, will use the first phase outputs, e.g. inventories and methodologies, and will include capacity building in developing countries.

The first component has duration of four years and became operational in November 2004. In addition to the workshop for which this document has been prepared, the activities planned for the first two years include¹⁰:

- *Inventories of fisheries monitoring systems, fishery resources and fisheries: Questionnaire surveys and regional workshops*
The first inventory of data collection systems is carried out in the South East Asia region in cooperation with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC). A regional workshop will be held in February 2005. Similar activities are planned for the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, also in 2005, and in West Africa and the Bay of Bengal region in 2006.
- *Development of standards for ensuring information quality and security*
- *Initial studies and workshops for the development of new approaches with regard to monitoring of small-scale fisheries, inclusion of socio-economic information, monitoring of inland fisheries and implementation of the ecosystem approach.*

Activities foreseen for the second half of Component 1 include pilot studies and support to research initiatives for the testing of new approaches, development of indicators for sustainable development, establishment of protocols for the inputs to FIGIS and for exchange of information.

¹⁰ If full funding can be guaranteed.

Box 1: FishCode STF Project Components

Component 1: Development of inventories, methodologies and operational guidelines

This component covers the creation of methodological descriptions of fishery statistical and data collection systems used by all countries and regional fisheries bodies. At the same time it will provide an overview of fish stocks and/or fisheries management units, whether monitored or not, by country and/or region. The aim of this exercise, to be executed mainly by correspondence and through questionnaires and regional workshops, is to obtain a complete picture of all systems in use and all stocks or management units monitored, so as to identify gaps in monitoring and above all to assess the quality of the systems used. The main inventory will cover data systems on all aspects of fisheries, including data on fleets, employment, processing, consumption, trade and sociological and economic aspects. This will also facilitate an evaluation of data collection and handling practices by country, the flows of data from national to regional and global levels and hence of the data as published by regional fisheries bodies and FAO. Finally, it will form the basis for improvements and identification of training needs in developing countries to be addressed under Component 2.

The implementation of this component will take the following considerations into account.

- There is a need to develop data collection systems that are better suited to cover small-scale fisheries and multi-species fisheries and for the development of criteria and methods for ensuring information quality and security.
- Routine data collection on economic and social aspects of fisheries is often neglected and consequently managers find themselves deprived of the data necessary to take decisions in cases of conflicts between different types of fisheries, the protection of labour forces engaged in existing fisheries against new arrivals, etc. The Project will investigate requirements and develop systems for the collection of such data.
- Computerized systems facilitate the exchange of data and information and thus the setting up of large data banks such as the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS). The Project will develop arrangements for the provision and exchange of information and assist in making improvements to the inputs to FIGIS, including the expansion of the scope of information on status and trends of fisheries.
- Ideally fisheries should be managed based on ecosystem considerations. However, ecosystem management requires huge amounts of data. The Project will investigate the data requirements and practical solutions for such management systems.

Component 2: Field training and implementation at national and regional levels

The aim of Component 2 is to improve substantially the quality of collection and processing of fisheries statistics and other data and information on capture fisheries in selected developing countries with important inland or marine fisheries. This would lead to better data for fisheries management at national level and, in cases of stocks shared between neighbouring countries, at regional level as well. Improvements in reporting to FAO and other agencies would be an important additional benefit.

Component 2 covers capacity building at all levels, and implementation of improved or new statistical and other data collection and processing systems in selected countries. There is also a need for improved interaction between fishery statisticians, fisheries analysts, socio-economists and fish stock assessment experts. The Project should facilitate this interaction.

Activities under Component 2 will be field-oriented and distributed over Africa, the Americas and Asia. The beneficiary States will be selected from developing countries with substantial capture fisheries, either inland or marine, that have a potential of becoming an example for other countries in similar situations.

REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES (RFBs) AND THE STRATEGY-STF

Overview of RFBs and their role in conservation and fisheries management

Almost 40 Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs)¹¹ and arrangements are at present in existence in different parts of the world. Their combined area of competence covers parts of all oceans and a large part of the world's inland waters. Some are specific for a group of species or a fishery and others for a geographical area, or a combination thereof. FAO has assisted in the establishment of about a quarter of the total number of RFBs while others are the result of independent initiatives. A list of RFBs is included in Appendix I.

The RFBs vary in scope with regard to species, fisheries and geographic areas. They also vary considerably when it comes to mandate, functions, decision-making powers and procedures. However, a general shift in the roles of RFBs has been noted during the last few decades. In the early days, the mandates and functions of RFBs were based on the concept of abundant resources and free access to fishing grounds. RFBs served as fora for discussion and the main functions included cooperative research and database development and analysis. In the second half of the 20th century, when more intensive management measures were prompted by the realisation that some fish stocks were fished at or beyond their sustainable yields, RFBs became involved in the setting of catch quotas and joint inspection schemes. These functions were, however, limited by the mandates usually given to RFBs by their members; RFBs had advisory and research roles rather than decision-making and enforcement powers with regard to fisheries management. The importance of the measures in a global context was also limited due to the still relatively low number of RFBs¹².

The situation started to change when the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was agreed on and adopted in 1982. The Convention envisaged several new functions and activities to be undertaken by RFBs regarding high sea stocks and fishing, advice to coastal states, dispute settlement and marine mammal protection. This prompted RFBs to review their mandates and a number of new RFBs were established. However, RFBs still generally remained without fisheries management authority.

Since the mid-1990s, several important international fisheries instruments containing key provisions relevant to the participation of RFBs in their implementation have been introduced, i.e. the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement¹³, the 1995 United Nations Fish Stock Agreement¹⁴ and in 1995 the CCRF. The CCRF has later been supplemented with a number of IPOAs. The IPOA to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU) in 2001 refers particularly to RFBs.¹⁵ There are also other international

¹¹ The following definition is used in FAO (1999): "A regional fishery body refers to a mechanism through which three or more States or international organizations that are parties to an international fishery agreement or arrangement collaboratively engage each other in multilateral management of fishery affairs related to transboundary, straddling, highly or high seas migratory stocks, through the collection and provision of scientific information and data, serving as technical and policy forum, or taking decisions pertaining to the development and conservation, management and responsible utilization of the resources".

¹² Swan 2004.

¹³ Agreement to promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas 1993.

¹⁴ Agreement for the Implementation of the Provision of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, 1995.

¹⁵ Swan 2004.

conventions calling for increased regional cooperation such as the WSSD Plan of Implementation.¹⁶

The provisions relating to the role of RFBs in these more recent fisheries instruments indicate recognition by the international community that cooperation among states is essential for ensuring a sustainable utilisation of aquatic resources and that RFBs should be given increased decision making power and authority. Recognising that, in most cases, the present fisheries management systems have failed to be effective, the concept of “fisheries governance” has emerged. Fisheries governance is a broader concept than conservation and management, or sustainable development. It represents a participative, inclusive and flexible approach and recognises the global network in which governments, institutions and stakeholders interact. In this system, RFBs serve as a gateway between the global and national levels of fisheries governance.¹⁷

Sound regional governance depends on effective inputs from member states and organisations. There has to be a political willingness of member states to participate openly and to delegate authority to the regional bodies. The RFBs, and their members, also have to have the capacity to meet financial and technical obligations¹⁸. While constraints exist – in varying degrees – many RFBs contribute to governance in a number of areas. In a questionnaire survey, RFBs were asked about activities and priorities of their organisations. The answers showed that some of the most important issues were those surrounding responsible fisheries management, the ecosystem approach, by catch and IUU fishing.¹⁹

FAO has hosted three meetings of RFBs; in 1999, 2001 and 2003. These meetings have given an opportunity to discuss and coordinate issues of concern to RFBs. For example, the need to improve information on status and trends was discussed in the early meetings and the RFBs participated in the development of the Strategy-STF. Constraints with regard to availability of relevant information and accurate data and statistics constitute major concerns in many RFBs. In addition to the generally increased demand on the RFBs related to their evolving role in fisheries governance – increasing their need for capacity building and access to information and data – several of the issues covered by the Strategy-STF are directly relevant to the activities of many RFBs, e.g. the application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management and collaboration with FIGIS-FIRMS.

The Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP)

The Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) was initially established in 1959 to improve the collection and reporting on fishery statistics in the North Atlantic area. However, in 1995 it was modified and reconstituted due to increasing demands for reliable fishery statistics and its scope was widened to include all parts of the world. The terms of reference of the CWP include to review requirements for fishery statistics, to agree standards concepts, definitions, classifications and methodologies, and to make recommendations and coordinate activities with regard to collection and dissemination of fishery statistics²⁰.

¹⁶ FAO 2003b.

¹⁷ Swan 2004.

¹⁸ FAO 1999.

¹⁹ Swan 2003.

²⁰ FAO 1995.

The CWP consists of experts nominated by intergovernmental organisations having competence in fishery statistics. FAO, several RFBs and other organisations concerned with fishery statistics, e.g. Eurostat and OECD, are members of the CWP. The CWP participates in the FAO-RFBs meetings mentioned above.

In the 20th CWP Session in 2003²¹, the possible role of CWP and RFBs in the implementation of the Strategy-STF was discussed. The CWP had participated in Technical Consultation on Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries in March 2002 and RFBs were involved in the development of the Strategy-STF. The meeting agreed that CWP should support the implementation of the Strategy-STF within the framework of its mandate. At the Intersessional Meeting of CWP Agencies in February 2004, it was agreed to organise the RFB-STF Workshop to discuss in more detail the roles of CWP and RFBs in the implementation of the Strategy-STF.

The objectives of the Strategy are similar to those of the CWP and several elements of the Strategy-STF are of direct concern to the CWP, e.g.:

- Development of standards and quality criteria for data and information.
- Collaboration with FIGIS-FIRMS.
- Development of socio-economic and environmental sustainability indicators (work carried out by Eurostat and SEAFDEC).

POSSIBLE ROLES OF RFBs AND THE CWP IN IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

Summary of the context and framework for cooperation

As noted in the discussion above, there are several elements of the Strategy-STF that are of direct interest to RFBs and the CWP. Some RFBs and the CWP are already carrying out activities related to actions proposed by the Strategy-STF, e.g.:

- Implementation of an ecosystem approach and the development of socio-economic and environmental sustainability indicators.
- Collaboration with FIGIS-FIRMS.
- Development of standards and quality criteria for data and information.

In the Strategy-STF, the possibility for States to participate in the implementation of the Strategy-STF through their membership in RFBs is directly mentioned in several of the proposals for required actions, i.e.:

- Development of standards and systems for data collection for small-scale fisheries and multi-species fisheries.
- Expansion of the scope and collection of information to support the incorporation of ecosystem considerations into fisheries management and development of indicators of sustainable development.
- Establishment of a process for scientific oversight of status and trends information in relation to the global inventory of stocks and fisheries.
- Support and participation for the development of FIGIS.
- Development of mechanisms for information exchange.

²¹ See FAO 2003c.

- Establishment of working groups for enhancing the quality and transparency of scientific information.

However, the participation of RFBs is not limited to the above areas of activities. The overall approach of the Strategy-STF and the FishCode-STF Project is participatory and its guidelines indicate that RFBs and the CWP should contribute, within the limits of their mandates, to the implementation of the Strategy-STF. Moreover, RFBs – particularly in regions of developing countries – are mentioned as potential beneficiaries of the envisaged capacity building exercises. This approach is consistent with the overall development of fisheries governance and the recognition of the importance of increased regional and global cooperation by policy-makers in national, regional and international institutions and organisations.

In Southeast Asia, where activities regarding the statistical system inventory have been started, the FishCode-STF Project is working in partnership with SEAFDEC. For the forthcoming inventories in other regions, partner organisations have not yet been identified but it is the intention of the Project to seek similar arrangements with regional organisations. The mutual advantages of this implementation approach are evident. The Project gains in effectiveness by benefiting from the regional knowledge of the RFB and from the increased efficiency in contacts and communications. The RFB is given an opportunity to enhance its own capacity with regard to assembly and dissemination of status and trends information and also to provide views and inputs into an international process of improving information at national, regional and global levels.

The FishCode-STF Project has only recently become operational and is at the beginning of its first four-year phase for Component 1. Plans and arrangements for its implementation are in the process of being elaborated and established. As seen from the discussion in this document, the arguments for cooperation and a wide participation in the implementation of the Strategy-STF are many and the RFB community is called upon for its support. The RFB-STF Workshop gives an opportunity for potential RFB partners to reflect on their possible roles, to provide inputs and suggest contributions for incorporation into the Project activities and implementation arrangements.

Suggested topics for discussion in RFB-STF Workshop

In order to identify collaboration opportunities and to define possible partnership arrangements for the effective implementation of the Strategy-STF through the FishCode-STF Project, this document suggests a number of issues to be discussed in the RFB-STF Workshop. These issues concern common areas of interest and suggestions for partnership activities, modalities of cooperation and institutional arrangements and needs for capacity building.

1. What are the areas of common interests of the FishCode-STF Project, the RFBs and CWP?
 - a. What activities and interests does the CWP have that are relevant to the implementation of the Strategy-STF?
 - b. What activities and interests do individual RFBs have that are relevant to the implementation of the Strategy-STF?
 - c. Are there areas of interest common to the RFB community as a whole that are of relevance to the implementation of the Strategy-STF?

Workshop participants are invited to report on the work programmes of their organisations.

2. What activities would be suitable for partnership implementation? Suggestions from FishCode-STF Project management include:

- a. *Inventory of existing fishery data collection systems, fishery resources and fisheries and incorporation of results into FIGIS.*

The inventory will build on work already carried out by FIGIS-FIRMS. Collaboration with RFBs could be envisaged for the operational aspects of the inventory, including questionnaire surveys and regional workshops, development of protocols and validation of results.

- b. *Development of criteria, methods and processes for ensuring the quality and security of information on status and trends.*

The principle of best scientific evidence should apply to information on status and trends in accordance with internationally agreed standards and practices. RFBs, possibly through the CWP, could participate in defining criteria and methods and establishing a process and arrangements for scientific oversight of status and trends information. A working group of appointed experts could be established for this purpose.

- c. *Expanding the scope of information on status and trends of fisheries to include economic, social and environmental aspects and allow for the incorporation of ecosystem considerations into fisheries management.*

Several RFBs are already working on introducing the ecosystem approach in relation to fisheries management. The Project could work with RFBs on issues related to status and trends information needed for the ecosystem approach and indicators for sustainable development.

The Workshop is asked to review these proposals and recommend additions, elaborations and amendments.

3. What implementation arrangements should be established for the partnership activities and what institutional aspects need to be considered?

For each proposed partnership activity, it is proposed that the following issues are discussed:

- a. Which RFBs – and other organisations – should participate?
 - b. How should the partnership activity be organised, e.g. by the establishment of a working group, bilateral agreements between the participating RFB(s) and the Project for the provision of certain services, organisation of workshops, expert consultations, etc.?
 - c. Are there formalities and issues with regard to the mandate of the RFB(s) and their relation with Member States that need to be considered in a partnership agreement between the RFB(s) and the Project?
 - d. Are there other issues relating to institutional arrangements that need to be taken into consideration?

4. What are the needs for capacity building in RFBs with regard to implementing the Strategy-STF and improving information on status and trends of capture fisheries in general and with regard to the proposed activities for collaboration in particular?

The Workshop is requested to prepare a report on their findings and recommendations to be presented to the 21st CWP Session, starting on 1 March 2005.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Appropriate and accurate information is essential for all policy development and decision-making and the fisheries sector is no exception. While fishery data collection and research has been the subject of various international instruments and initiatives, the assembly and dissemination of status and trends information have received less attention. The preparation and adoption of the *Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries* is a crucial framework for improving this situation and its implementation will create important benefits to fisheries management and conservation. However, the Strategy-STF will only be effective if widely implemented and all national, regional and global organisations and institutions concerned with the management and use of aquatic resources are urged to support and participate in this work.

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APPENDIX I:
Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs)²²

ATLANTIC OCEAN AND ADJACENT SEAS

ACRONYM	NAME	AREA OF COMPETENCE
AAFC	Atlantic Africa Fisheries Conference	Eastern Atlantic (Namibia-Morocco)
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic	Eastern Central Atlantic between Cape Spartel and the Congo River
COREP	Comité régional des pêches du Golfe de Guinée	Central and southern Gulf of Guinea
COFREMAR	Joint Technical Commission for the Argentina/Uruguay Maritime Front	South Atlantic
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean	Mediterranean, adjacent waters, the Black sea and the Azov Sea
IBSFC	International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission	Baltic Sea and the Belts
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas	Atlantic Ocean including the adjacent seas
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea	Atlantic Ocean
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization	Northwest Atlantic Ocean
NAMMCO	North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission	North Atlantic
NASCO	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization	Atlantic Ocean north of 36°N latitude
NEAFC	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission	Northeast Atlantic Ocean
SEAFO	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization	South East Atlantic Ocean
SRCF (CSRP)	Commission sous-régionale des pêches	N.W. Africa (Mauritania to Guinea including Cape Verde)
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission	Western Central Atlantic Ocean

²² From Swan 2003 and FAO website database for RFBs.

INDIAN OCEAN REGION

ACRONYM	NAME	AREA OF COMPETENCE
BOBP-IGO	Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation	Bay of Bengal
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission	Indian Ocean and adjacent seas north of the Antarctic Convergence
RECOFI	Regional Commission for Fisheries	The Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman
SWIOFC *)	South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission	South West Indian Ocean
WIOTO	Western Indian Ocean Tuna Organization	Western Indian Ocean

*) Not yet established/operational.

PACIFIC OCEAN REGION

ACRONYM	NAME	AREA OF COMPETENCE
APFIC	Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission	Indo-Pacific area (including inland waters)
CEPTFA *)	Council of the Eastern Pacific Tuna Fishing Agreement	Eastern Pacific Ocean
CPPS	Permanent South Pacific Commission	South Pacific (East)
FFA	South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency	South Pacific (Central and West)
IATTC	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission	Eastern Pacific Ocean
IPHC	International Pacific Halibut Commission	North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea
NPAFC	North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission	North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas north of 33°N
PICES	North Pacific Marine Science Organization	North Pacific and adjacent Seas
PSC	Pacific Salmon Commission	Northwest Pacific
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community	South Pacific South of the Equator
SEAFDEC	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center	Southeast Asian region
WCPFC *)	Commission for The Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific / Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention	Western and Central Pacific Ocean

*) Not yet established/operational.

INLAND

ACRONYM	NAME	AREA OF COMPETENCE
CIFA	Committee for Inland Fisheries of Africa	Inland waters of member countries
COPESCAL	Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America	Inland waters of member countries
EIFAC	European Inland Advisory Fisheries Commission	European inland waters
LVFO	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization	Lake Victoria
MRC	Mekong River Commission	Mekong River Basin

NB. APFIC in the Pacific also covers inland waters.

GLOBAL AND TRANS-OCEAN

ACRONYM	NAME	AREA OF COMPETENCE
CCAMLR	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources	Antarctic Ocean
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna	Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans where SBT are found
CWP	Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics	All oceans
IWC	International Whaling Commission	All waters in which whaling is carried out and land stations
OLDEPESCA	Latin American Organization for the Development of Fisheries	Oceans bordering Latin America

Annex C: Agenda

Monday 28 February 2005

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| 09.30 | Opening and welcome |
| 10.00 | Presentation of “The role of regional fisheries bodies in implementation of the FAO strategy for improving information on status and trends in capture fisheries “ by FishCode-STF project. Questions and clarifications. |
| 10.45 | Coffee break |
| 11.15 | Interventions of participating representatives of RFBs on their work programmes and areas of common interest with the Strategy-STF. |
| 12.30 | Lunch |
| 13.30 | Discussions and identification of possible partnership activities. |
| 14.30 | Discussions on implementation arrangements for partnership activities |
| 15.30 | Discussion on needs for capacity building in RFBs |
| 16.30 | Chair’s summary |

Tuesday 1 March 2005

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|-------|--|
| 13.00 | Presentation of the draft Workshop report, comments and clarifications |
| 13.45 | Adoption of workshop report and closing of the meeting |