National Aquaculture Legislation Overview
Iran (Islamic Republic of)

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Profile

**Basic legislation**

The management of fisheries and aquaculture activities in Iran is largely based on the provisions of the Law of Protection and Exploitation of Fisheries resources (1995) and the Law Concerning the Exploitation and Protection of Aquatic Resources (1976).

The Iranian Fisheries Organization (Shilat) is the main agency responsible for fisheries and aquaculture management in Iran. Under the 1995 Law, Shilat is in charge of resource protection and rehabilitation of existing stocks, improvement of habitats and stocking of Iranian marine and inland waters, as well as development of fish farming and fish production through research, training and promoting technical services. Shilat is furthermore tasked to adopt regulations for the implementation of the 1995 Law in coordination with the Department of Environment. Shilat is established under the Establishment Act of Iranian Fisheries Organization (2004) and is affiliated to the Ministry of jahad Agriculture.

The institutional framework for aquaculture in Iran is detailed further in the Guidelines for Aquaculture and Fisheries, which were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 1999 (as amended in 2007). In addition to Shilat, there are four other government departments that are involved in aquaculture management: the Department of the Environment, the Veterinary Organization, the Department of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Energy (Department of Water Resources).

Under article 14 of the 1995 Law, a resource management plan for Iranian marine and inland waters will be developed on the basis of research carried out by Shilat, aimed at “identifying and introducing exploitable resources.”

Under article 18 of the Law of the 4th Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan (2005–2010), the
Government shall prepare a plan for the development of agriculture and natural resources with a view to attaining self-sufficiency in the production of basic agricultural products, improving food security and production, increasing export of agricultural products, and, generally, enhancing growth in the sector. With respect to fisheries, one of the specific goals set out is to increase the production of fisheries protein with a view to increasing the per capita consumption. A sector plan for agriculture and fisheries has been prepared, but it is only available in Farsi language.

### Legal definition

The Law concerning the exploitation and protection of aquatic resources (1976) defines aquaculture as follows: “Aquaculture is the term absolutely applied to farming, culture and producing aquatic mammals (animals and plants) [sic] regardless of its objectives.”

A further definition for aquaculture is provided in the Guidelines on Aquaculture 1999 (as amended in 2007), which describes aquaculture as “all the activities which are associated with rearing aquatic animals from eggs until they are marketed as products.”

### Guidelines and codes of conduct

There are no codes of conduct on aquaculture developed by the private sector in Iran. Codes of conducts for food safety have, however, been adopted by the government. In order to meet European Union (EU) regulations, centrally sponsored schemes have been initiated to provide infrastructure at fishing harbours and landing centres.

### International arrangements

Iran is a member of:

- NACA (Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific)
- INFOFISH (Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fish Products in the Asia/Pacific Region)
- RECOFI (Regional Commission for Fisheries)
- OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health)
- Codex Alimentarius Commission

Iran is a party to:

- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)
- CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity)

### Planning

Articles 32 to 35 of the Law Concerning the Exploitation and Protection of Aquatic Resources (1976) deal with aquaculture licensing requirements. Under the Law, all kinds of aquaculture activities require a licence from Shilat. Article 17 of the Law of Protection and Exploitation of Fisheries Resources (1995) also state that aquaculture activities need to obtain a licence issued by Shilat. Under article 18 of the 1995 Law, a license cannot be granted if the aquaculture establishment will cause damage to the marine resources.

Further details on licensing requirements are provided for in the Guidelines for Aquaculture and Fisheries (1999, as amended in 2007), which reiterate that a licence is required for the construction and operation of an aquaculture facility.
The power to grant aquaculture licences in Iran is shared between Shilat and the Department of Environment in the following way:

Under Article 15 of the Guidelines for Aquaculture and Fisheries, Shilat will consider the feasibility of any proposed project or activity in relation to aquaculture and its relation to the overall national development plans. It evaluates the capability of the applicants, in particular their technical, financial, and managerial credentials and abilities. Shilat is also responsible for approving all aquaculture construction plans and the monitoring of their operation to make sure they meet the required regulations (Article 29).

The Department of Environment is responsible for environmental issues related to the establishment and operation of aquaculture facilities. It must ensure the conservation of resources, as well as the protection of the areas that have been excluded from any aquaculture development plans, including from aquaculture activities. The Department of Environment exercises supreme authority in relation to aquaculture and its rules override the regulations introduced by Shilat. It is essential to have the approval of the Department of Environment in order to engage in any aquaculture activities.

Under the Guidelines for Aquaculture and Fisheries, traditional aquaculture activities like fish farming in irrigated canals and reservoirs where aquaculture is not a major activity do not need to follow the regular procedure for obtaining a licence. A letter of approval from the nearest Shilat office is all that is needed for these small scale aquaculture operations. Aquaculture activities for recreational purposes do not require a licence (Article 14).

### Access to land and water

The Department of Natural Resources is responsible for leasing of public land for aquaculture purposes. It is also responsible for protecting forests and pastures against aquaculture development plans.

The Department of Water Resources (Ministry of Energy) regulates the supply of freshwater to aquaculture facilities. According to Article 19 of the Guidelines on Aquaculture (1999, as amended in 2007), licences for aquaculture activities can be issued by Shilat only after a permit is granted by the Department of Water Resources for the use of water. Such permits are issued upon a payments calculated by the Department (Articles 20–21).

### EIA

The Department of Environment is the main government body in Iran responsible for assessing environmental impacts relating to aquaculture. The Department operates under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (1972, as amended in 1991).

Under Article 6 of the Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment (1997), the implementing bodies of aquaculture projects should prepare an EIA report covering the points required by the Department of Environment and related by-laws. Article 7 states that reports on EIA shall cover both the construction period and the operation period. The dimensions to be studied with respect to environmental impacts are the following (Article 10):

- The environmental impacts on the physical environment (e.g., impact on land and water);
- the environmental impacts on the living environment (e.g., impact on plant and animal species and on habitats);
- the impacts on the social and cultural environment (e.g., impacts on people’s health and environment; employment, housing, education); and
- the environmental impacts on the development plans.

The EIA report should specify the feasibility of the project and whether it needs alteration or should be denied permission to proceed. The Department of Environment must give its verdict within three months (Article 7). The Guidelines provide a detailed plan for the preparation of a preliminary assessment report, as well as a
The provisions of Articles 1 and 9 of the Environmental Protection Law (1974) may also be invoked in relation to EIA. Under Article 1, the Department of Environment is responsible for the protection and enhancement of the environment, and must prevent any act (including those related to aquaculture), which may harm or destroy the environment. Under Article 9, it is prohibited to engage in any act which may result in harming the environment. Such acts include the introduction of harmful substance into the air, water, and soil to the extent that such an introduction results in physical, chemical and biological changes harmful to humans, animals and plants.

### Operation

#### Water and wastewater

According to the Establishment Act of the Ministry of Energy (1974), the Ministry of Energy (Department of Water Resources) has the overall responsibility for the regulation and supply of fresh water, as well as wastewater management in Iran. Under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (1972), these responsibilities are reiterated.

Under Article 20 of the Law of the 4th Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan (2005–2010), which prolongs the application of Article 134 of the 3rd Development Plan, a permit is required for the exploitation of surface and underground water, the use of urban water supply networks for industrial or animal husbandry purposes, as well as for uses that generate large quantity of sewage. A permit is also required for all activities that produce large amounts of wastewater. Provisions on hygiene measures and treatment of sewage can be attached to these permits.

#### Fish movement

The Iranian Veterinary Organization was created by the Establishment Act (1971) and is empowered to control the import of all exotic species, the transport of all live animals and aquaculture products (processed fish of any kind). Article 2 of the Act defines the term “animal” to include aquatic resources which also extends to fish eggs, larvae and adults.

Pursuant to the Regulations Concerning the Movement of Animals (1994), the movement, transport, import and export of all animals, including their products, require a permit from the Veterinary Organization.

Under the provisions of Article 35 of the Guidelines on Aquaculture and Fisheries (1999, as amended in 2007), a licence from Shilat is required for import of live aquatic animals, as well as for the local transport of live aquaculture animals.

Under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (1972), the Department of Environment controls the import of exotic species.

#### Disease control

The Office for Aquatic Health and Disease of the Iranian Veterinary Organization, together with Shilat, is responsible for aquatics animal health and diseases. The Organization operates within the general rules set out in Articles 3, 5, 6 and 7 of the Establishment Act of 1971 and the Regulations Concerning the Movement of Animals (1994).

Under Article 18 of the Law of Protection and Exploitation of Fisheries Resources (1995), Shilat is required to order the necessary preventive measures when an aquaculture facility is exposed to pollution or contagious disease.
Pursuant to the Law Concerning the Exploitation and Protection of Aquatic Resources (1976), all aquaculture facilities under the provisions of the legislation should provide information and statistical data regarding their activities and production to Shilat (Art. 34).

Under Article 29 of the Guidelines on Aquaculture and Fisheries (1999, as amended in 2007), the inspectors from Shilat can inspect the aquaculture facilities at any time, and the licence holder is required to facilitate such inspections. The aquaculture facilities must provide the inspectors with appropriate information and statistics (Article 37).

According to the provisions of Articles 39 and 40 of the Guidelines on Aquaculture and Fisheries, the licence holder must inform the nearest Shilat office of any outbreak of a dangerous or infectious disease. Under Article 41, in case of an outbreak of a dangerous or infectious disease, Shilat and the Veterinary Organization will decide on the most suitable way of destroying the aquaculture products, and the aquaculture facility must then be thoroughly decontaminated. All the expenses of such operations are borne by the licence holder. Under Article 37, the Veterinary Organization, in cooperation with Shilat, shall publish a list of infectious and dangerous diseases.

### Drugs

The Office for Aquatic Health and Disease of the Iranian Veterinary Organization is responsible for the application of chemicals and drugs in the fish farms and hatcheries. Under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (1972), the Department of Environment is also responsible for the application of chemicals in aquaculture facilities.

Under Article 37 of the Guidelines on Aquaculture and Fisheries (1999, as amended in 2007), the Veterinary Organization, in cooperation with Shilat, shall every year publish a list of drugs and chemicals that are banned from being used in aquaculture.

### Feed

Under Article 127 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Resolution No. T/64545-H 185, the Ministry of jahad Agriculture is authorized to import fish feed, but reportedly only private companies do this today.

### Food safety

The Iranian Veterinary Organization and the Ministry of Health and Medical Education cooperate closely in monitoring the supply of fish and fish products to the markets. The Veterinary Organization controls the safety of fish and fish products from production in the aquaculture facilities to the markets, while the markets operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education. All products must be properly labelled. Codes of conducts for food safety have been adopted.

The Institute of Standards and Industrial Research, operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Trade, is responsible for the development and design of official standards for all products (excluding pharmaceutical products) in Iran. The functions of the Institute include:

- To determine and formulate national standards.
- To conduct applied research to raise standard levels.
- To upgrade the quality of domestic products.
- To monitor the implementation of compulsory standards.
- To carry out relevant research, especially regarding production methods, conservation, packaging and transportation.
In addition to these functions, the Institute deals with product specifications and monitoring, and control of origins and destinations of products.

Miscellaneous

Aquaculture investment

The Iranian Fisheries Research Organization (IFRO), which is affiliated to the Ministry of jahad Agriculture, is responsible for fisheries research in Iran, including aquaculture research. The Supreme Committee for Research of IFRO is responsible for approving research projects. The results of the approved research projects are submitted to Shilat for consideration. If approved, Shilat will run pilot schemes, applying the results through its training centres. Universities also play a significant role in research and development of aquaculture in Iran, alongside the training and extension centres run by Shilat.

References

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Agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic biological resources of the Caspian Sea. 2014-09-29

This Agreement enters into force after 30 days since the date of submittal to the depositary state of Convention of the documents related to its ratification by all the Caspian states.

Countries

Azerbaijan; Iran, Islamic Republic of; Kazakhstan; Russian Federation;
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Resources of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iranian Fisheries Organization (Shilat)
Department of the Environment
The Iranian Veterinary Organization
Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Office of Legal Affairs
Ministry of Energy
National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company
Institute of Standards & Research of Iran

Related links

Country profiles: Iran