

## Informal Consultation for Europe and Central Asia

16–17 May 2019

Budapest, Hungary

Background Note

Session 4

### Regional Technical Commissions' Contribution to the Regional Priorities

#### 1. Introduction

1. The priorities of FAO's work as agreed by the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) in the Europe and Central Asia region covers agriculture, fisheries and forestry. In detail, the ERC at its Thirty-first Session in 2018<sup>1</sup> acknowledged the importance of the proposed priorities for the region:

- formulating effective policies for sustainable and inclusive growth for farmers and the rural population;
- enhancing the reach towards new markets through the alignment of trade, food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary policies;
- promoting sustainable natural resource management, combating land degradation and desertification; and
- addressing food insecurity and reduction of all forms of malnutrition.

2. The regional priorities are addressed by three Regional Initiatives (RIs): “Empowering smallholders and family farms for improved rural livelihoods and poverty reduction” (RI-1); “Improved agrifood trade and market integration” (RI-2); and “Managing natural resources sustainably, under a changing climate” (RI-3). Additionally, the area of food security and nutrition is mainstreamed within the three Regional Initiatives as a cross-cutting field.<sup>2</sup> The Regional Initiatives ensure a programmatic approach, addressing regional priorities and supporting the implementation of country programmes, by mobilizing the Organization's technical work across the Strategic Objectives and the cross-cutting themes (statistics, gender, nutrition, governance and climate change).<sup>3</sup> In addition, the Regional Initiatives support the linking of technical expertise to ongoing policy processes in the region related to smallholders and family farms, trade, and climate change, boosting responses to country demands and increasing impacts towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. Currently, there are six FAO technical commissions in the Europe and Central Asia region, established under Articles VI and XIV of the FAO Constitution:

<sup>1</sup> Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region (ERC/18/5), Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16–18 May 2018. Available at: [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/bodies/ERC\\_31/MW161\\_5/MW161\\_ERC\\_18\\_5\\_en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/ERC_31/MW161_5/MW161_ERC_18_5_en.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> More information on FAO Regional Initiatives is available at: <http://www.fao.org/europe/regional-initiatives/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> More information on FAO cross-cutting themes is available in the Reviewed Strategic Framework. C 2017/7 Rev.1 (p. 31). Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ms431reve.pdf>.



- **Article VI**<sup>4</sup> – Under this article were established the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), the European Forestry Commission (EFC), and the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC).
- **Article XIV**<sup>5</sup> – Under this article were established the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish), and the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD).<sup>6</sup>

4. Although there are significant institutional and operational diversities across these bodies – in addition to being dedicated to such varied sectors as forestry, fisheries and aquaculture – currently all Article-VI bodies, the ECA (since the Twenty-second Session of the ERC in 2000), EFC and EIFAAC (both since the Thirtieth Session of the ERC in 2016) report to the Regional Conference for Europe and in this context are further integrated into the work at the regional level. Accordingly, these commissions review technical aspects and issues of importance to the region within their mandates and present recommendations for the ERC to consider in its policy discussions and deliberations.<sup>7</sup> CACFish decided at its Fifth Session on 10–12 October 2016 to also report to the ERC. GFCM reports to the ERC with an information item. The only commission so far not reporting to the ERC is the EuFMD.

5. Considering that the majority of the technical commissions formally report to the ERC, the objective of this session is to seek the Members' views on the below questions:

- how to enhance collaboration among the executive committees/bureaus of the various commissions on common topics, including the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change; and
- what would be the way forward to facilitate exchanges among commissions in order to better coordinate input to the ERC based on the priorities as listed in paragraphs 1 and 2 above.

6. This document consists of three sections:

1. Section I provides general background information on Regional Priorities, Regional Initiatives and the technical commissions in the Europe and Central Asia region.
2. Section II briefly outlines the main priorities of the commissions, their linkage to the strategic framework, and the contribution of the commissions to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region.
3. Section III provides draft conclusions and follow-up recommendations.

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<sup>4</sup> Basic texts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mp046e.pdf#page=11>.

<sup>5</sup> Basic texts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mp046e.pdf#page=11>.

<sup>6</sup> The current document does not reach out to the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease, as it operates more independently from FAO.

<sup>7</sup> The ERC Multi-Year Programme of Work was approved by the ERC at its Thirtieth Session in May 2016.

## II. Outline of the main priorities of the technical commissions in the region

### Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)<sup>8</sup>

#### 1. Main priorities of work of CACFish for 2020–2021 (in general)

The main priorities of work of CACFish for 2020–2021 will be discussed at the Fifth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in November 2019 in Armenia. Members will make recommendations for CACFish-funded activities under the Revised Second Regional Work Programme (RWP2). The five Member Countries will review/approve the 2020–2021 intersessional work programme at the Seventh Session of CACFish, to be hosted by Tajikistan in 2020.

The Member Country priorities for 2018–2019 were discussed and agreed upon at the Fourth TAC meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia (November 2017) and approved unanimously by CACFish Members at the Sixth Session in Izmir, Turkey (October 2018). Below is a list of activities marked as priority by Members in the RWP2 from each of the five main topic areas, limited by the annual CACFish budget of USD 180 000, which is not sufficient to undertake all regional needs identified in the RWP2:

1. review of fisheries-related laws, legal mechanisms and regulations;
2. technical assistance and capacity building in aquaculture, for example in fish feed and broodstock management;
3. inland stock assessment as well as stocking and restocking for inland fisheries;
4. development/updating post-harvest management, technical advice on fish marketing and processing; and
5. relevant trainings for researchers, technical ministerial staff, hatchery managers and representatives of fishers' organizations.

#### 2. Linkage among the Regional Priorities, Regional Initiatives and the priorities of CACFish

The Sixth Session of CACFish approved regional activities related to achievements under all three Regional Initiatives. CACFish RWP2 priorities for the development of Central Asian inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture production for 2018–2019 are linked to: Regional Initiative 3 (Strategic Programme 2) on supporting countries in managing natural resources sustainably, combating land degradation and desertification and mitigating and adapting to climate change; Regional Initiative 1 (Strategic Programme 1 and Strategic Programme 2) through capacity training for government extension agents and smallholders/small-scale fishers; and Regional Initiative 2 (Strategic Programme 4) through intersessional activity on the post-harvest sector, primarily regarding food safety and the quality assurance of fish products.

#### 3. Contribution of CACFish to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals

The fisheries sector is best reflected under SDG 14, Life Below Water. FAO is custodian of five target indicators under this SDG (14.4, 14.6, 14.7, 14.b and 14.c). However, the mandate of CACFish is limited

<sup>8</sup> The Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) website is available at: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/cacfish/en>.

Report of the Fourth Session of CACFish, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 18–20 May 2015. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/fi/static-media/MeetingDocuments/CACFish/2016/default.htm>



to freshwater resources, while SDG 14 focuses on seas and oceans.<sup>9</sup> Marine fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea, Caspian Sea, and Mediterranean Sea are under the mandate of the General Fisheries Commission of the Mediterranean.

Inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture contribute to the following SDGs:<sup>10</sup>

**SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** Solutions to the management issues sought by CACFish contribute to addressing the problem of low fish consumption in Central Asia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Global fish consumption per capita in 2016 reached 20.3 kg per year, whereas in Central Asia and the Caucasus, human consumption of fish is below 5 kg per capita per year, the lowest level in the world. This has implications for obesity and heart disease of populations dependent on meat instead of healthier fish products for protein.

**SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** The World Bank has shown that half of global workers in fisheries and aquaculture value chains are women. For the most part, they contribute to post-harvest activities such as fish marketing, fish processing, quality assurance laboratories and trade. The regional capacity-building activities funded by CACFish encourage participation by women and youth.

**SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** CACFish activities in Central Asia are linked to the sustainable management of water resources, which contributes to rural livelihoods, as most fish farmers in the area are smallholders and small-scale fishers in rivers and lakes. Protecting biodiversity and natural resources for future generations also contributes to future employment when fish stocks are sustainable. FAO estimates that inland fisheries are an important source of direct employment and income to an estimated 16.8 to 20.7 million people globally.<sup>11</sup>

**SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water):** By contributing to the development and sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture, the work of CACFish contributes to addressing the issues of climate change, as aquaculture is more environmentally friendly than other forms of meat production. Fuel consumption for inland fisheries in lakes and rivers is typically lower than fuel consumption from commercial marine fisheries. Thus, improving the use of local water resources for fish production is more environmentally friendly than importing ocean fish from stocks that may be overfished or sourced illegally. FAO reports that 33.1 percent of global fish stocks are overutilized.

**SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):** CACFish directly contributes to this SDG because it promotes shared research, capacity-building activities and improved collaboration among the five Member Governments and their national research institutions. The South-South Cooperation is promoted through this regional commission.

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<sup>9</sup> According to the 2018 FAO publication *The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture*, available at: <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture>.

<sup>10</sup> According to the 2018 FAO publication *The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture*, available at: <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture>.

<sup>11</sup> According to the 2018 FAO publication *The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture*, available at: <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture>.

**European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)<sup>12</sup>**

## 1. Main priorities of the work of the ECA for 2020–2021

The main purpose of the European Commission on Agriculture<sup>13</sup> is to assist Member Governments in undertaking joint action and cooperating in agricultural problems, including research, education, extension, review of nutrition matters and issues related to agricultural economy not under the purview of FAO's Committee on Commodity Problems. To this end, the ECA aims to encourage and facilitate cooperation among international, governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with agriculture in the region.<sup>14</sup>

The main purpose of the European Commission on Agriculture<sup>15</sup> is to Following the recommendations from an ECA assessment conducted in 2017, the ECA adopted a more focused approach by choosing one selected theme for each Session; this allows for more in-depth technical discussions with Member States and for increased engagement of national technical experts in the relevant exchanges. In this respect, in line with the ECA biennial theme for 2018–2019 “Climate Change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO,” the Fortieth Session<sup>16</sup> focused on climate change and transboundary animal diseases, and the upcoming Forty-first Session, to be held 1–2 October 2019, will focus on plant health. The upcoming Session also will endorse the ECA priorities for 2020–2021.

## 2. Linkage among the Regional Priorities, Regional Initiatives, and the priorities of the ECA

The priorities of the ECA for 2018–2019 are fully aligned with the priorities identified by the Thirtieth Session of the ERC and with the three Regional Initiatives, designed to respond to these priority areas and to guide the formulation and implementation of FAO assistance in the region, revisited and endorsed by the Thirty-first Session of the ERC. Breaking them down by the relevant Regional Initiatives, they could be outlined as follows:

**Regional Initiative 1:** RI-1 contributes to making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable, to reducing rural poverty, and to eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. This Initiative is aligned with enabling more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems as well as the cross-cutting goal of ensuring food security and nutrition for all.

<sup>12</sup> The European Commission on Agriculture website is available at: <http://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/en/>. The ECA assures the availability of Executive Committee meeting reports and related background documents on the dedicated FAO website and pursues the preparations for the ECA session in a consultative manner. The Executive Committee of the ECA, in line with the recommendations of the assessment of the ECA, the format adopted for the Fortieth ECA, and the fact that the year 2020 will be the International Year of Plant Health, adopted plant health as the main theme for the Forty-first Session of the ECA. The preliminary draft agenda is presented under the separate background document (IC/2019 session 6).

<sup>13</sup> Following a request by the Twenty-second FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), the ECA is directly linked to the ERC, and the outcomes of the ECA's deliberations are submitted to the ERC for policy discussion and adoption. The 119th Session of the Council approved the ECA's revised mandate, which is geared to reviewing technical aspects and issues of importance to European Agriculture and Rural Development (see CL 119/PV).

<sup>14</sup> The FAO Governing and Statutory Bodies website is available at: [http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsb-subject-matter/statutory-bodies-details/en/c/76/?no\\_cache=1](http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsb-subject-matter/statutory-bodies-details/en/c/76/?no_cache=1).

<sup>15</sup> Following a request by the Twenty-second FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), the ECA is directly linked to the ERC, and the outcomes of the ECA's deliberations are submitted to the ERC for policy discussion and adoption. The 119th Session of the Council approved the ECA's revised mandate, which is geared to reviewing technical aspects and issues of importance to European Agriculture and Rural Development (see CL 119/PV).

<sup>16</sup> Report of the Fortieth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture, Budapest, 22–23 September 2017. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mo701e.pdf>



**Regional Initiative 2:** RI-2 provides support to Member Countries in enhancing the agrifood trade policy environment for small and medium-sized agricultural and food producers. It primarily contributes to the objective of enabling more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems, but it also contributes to eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition as well as to enhancing the productivity and sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, with the objective of providing policy and institutional support for the participation of the Member States in regional and global trade, the setting of standards and the organization of regional economic cooperation.

**Regional Initiative 3:** RI-3 aims at strengthening national capacities to achieve sustainable natural resource management, including climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction, and at scaling up agroecology through transitioning to more climate-resilient and sustainable food systems.

Specifically in this respect, the deliberations of the Fortieth Session of the ECA focused on animal health, climate change and related issues, contributing to the work carried out by FAO under the three Regional Initiatives. The ECA provided recommendations and facilitated technical discussions in respect to the effects of climate change on animal diseases, trade and food security in the region. In accordance with the document ECA/40/17/3,<sup>17</sup> Member States are in the process of developing or revising existing policies related to the surveillance and control of transboundary animal diseases, in line with the institutional and legal reforms of veterinary services. In particular, some countries<sup>18</sup> have supported capacity-building initiatives and the preparation of manuals and have conducted simulation exercises to promote the practical implementation of animal informatics and the One Health initiative. Western Balkan countries have raised awareness on the impacts of climate change among policymakers, farmers and veterinarians and have created public communication programmes related to the prevention and control of such transboundary animal diseases as lumpy skin disease, bluetongue and others.

In line with recommendations of the document [ECA/40/17/4](#)<sup>19</sup> on antimicrobial resistance, countries in Europe and Central Asia are contributing to raising awareness on antimicrobial resistance and promoting behavioural change through:

- the creation and implementation of public communication programmes;
- improved surveillance and monitoring, including data on incidence, prevalence and trends, to better understand and respond to antimicrobial resistance patterns and drivers;
- strengthened governance for stronger hygiene and infection prevention measures, including animal vaccination;
- the launch of activities to explore and promote best practices in the prudent use of antibiotics in both intensive and extensive livestock production systems; and
- the review and harmonization of legislation on antimicrobial use in agriculture, including bans on the use of antimicrobials in the prevention of infectious diseases in line with the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement.

On the basis of the document ECA/40/15/5,<sup>20</sup> the Commission discussed issues related to occurrence tracking and strategic responses to transboundary animal diseases and provided recommendations to the

<sup>17</sup> The document “The effect of climate change on animal diseases, trade and food security in the REU region,” from the Fortieth Session of the ECA, is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu348e.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Those countries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

<sup>19</sup> The document “Antimicrobial resistance (AMR): the loss of a major defence to the emerging challenge?,” from the Fortieth Session of the ECA, is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu349e.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> The document “Disease occurrence tracking: strategic response to TADs and informed decision-making,” from the Fortieth Session of the ECA, is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu347e.pdf>.



Member States, particularly outlining the absolute importance of the regional approach to transboundary animal diseases, including risk assessment and prioritization.

Drawing on the key messages from the document ECA/40/15/6,<sup>21</sup> the ECA discussed recommendations stemming from its country gender assessments and facilitated exchanges in respect to the challenges and opportunities for mainstreaming gender concerns in FAO work across the region, obtaining feedback, suggestions and requirements for further support from the Member States for advancing gender equality in the region.

### **3. Contribution of the ECA to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals**

The ECA contributes to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs through the FAO Strategic Programmes. Some examples in this context are:

- Related to SDG 1 and SDG 2, the ECA addresses target 1.4 on access to resources and services and target 2.3 on productivity and income growth for smallholders.
- Related to SDG 8 and SDG 17, as well as SDG 2, SDG 12 and SDG 15, the ECA addresses target 8.A on trade support for developing/least developed countries, target 17.10 on open and non-discriminatory trading systems, and target 17.11 on increasing developing/least developed countries' share of global exports.
- Related to SDG 6, SDG 13 and SDG 15, the ECA addresses target 6.5 on integrated water management, target 13.1 on resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards, and target 15.1 on the sustainable use of lands.
- Related to SDG 2, the ECA addresses target 2.1 on food security, target 2.2 on malnutrition, and target 2.3 on investment in agricultural infrastructure and services.

The Fortieth Session of the ECA focused on animal health, climate change and related issues, particularly contributing to the achievement of SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 13 and SDG 17. The upcoming session dedicated to plant health and related issues will contribute to the achievement of SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 8, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 15 and SDG 17. Moreover, the ECA sessions include, as a standing item, a report on progress made on advancing gender equality in the region (SDG 5).

## **European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD)**

### **1. Main priorities of work of the EuFMD for 2020–21 (in general)**

The mission of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease is promoting national and international action to prevent and progressively control foot-and-mouth disease. The vision of the recently adopted Strategic Plan (HOLD-FAST: 2019–2023) is a Europe secure from the daily threat of foot-and-mouth disease and similar transboundary animal diseases.

**The three strategic goals/pillars for 2019–2023 are:**

1. improved preparedness for the management of foot-and-mouth disease and similar transboundary animal diseases (“FAST diseases”) crises by Member Countries (39 countries in total) and across Europe as a whole;

<sup>21</sup> The document “Leaving no one behind: challenges and opportunities for mainstreaming gender concerns in FAO's work,” from the Fortieth Session of the ECA, is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu350e.pdf>.



2. reduced risk to Members from the FAST disease (foot-and-mouth disease and similar transboundary animal diseases) situation in the European neighbourhood (14 countries in North Africa, the Near East and the Trans-Caucasus); and
3. sustained progress of the Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases global strategy against foot-and-mouth disease and the improved security of the supply of effective vaccines.

In the period 2020–21, the EuFMD expects to implement approximately EUR 6 million in programme actions in support of these strategic goals, roughly EUR 4.5 million of which will be for Member States (goal 1) and neighbourhood countries (goal 2) – approximately 50 countries with supported national activities. At the global level (Goal 3), the EuFMD underpins the global progress monitoring system and provides expertise to the World Organization for Animal Health and FAO Regional Initiatives (not limited to Europe).

## **2. Linkage among the Regional Priorities, Regional Initiatives and the priorities of the EuFMD**

The 39 Member States of the EuFMD adopted a new strategy in 2019 (at the Forty-third Session in April) to address the range of animal diseases now threatening European countries, many of which relate to climate change (and insecurity) in the south and east of the Mediterranean basin.

By strengthening preparedness for climate-related threats and addressing the change in disease burdens in countries so far affected, the programme mainly addresses climate change adaptation in Regional Initiative 3.

## **European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)<sup>22</sup>**

### **1. Main priorities of work of EIFAAC for 2020–2021 (in general)**

The European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission's priorities for 2020–2021 will be decided at the upcoming Thirtieth EIFAAC Session, to be held 11–13 September 2019 in Dresden, Germany. The current work plan for 2017–2019 is built on three goals revised at the Twenty-ninth Session:

1. EIFAAC is a leading pan-European organization providing policy advice in inland fisheries and aquaculture, consistent with the objectives and principles of FAO (Strategic Objectives, Regional Initiatives, Sustainable Development Goals) and other relevant international instruments.
2. EIFAAC delivers technical and managerial advice, information and coordination on matters related to inland fisheries and aquaculture to its Members and serves as an international network of organizations, stakeholders, communities and intergovernmental organizations.
3. EIFAAC, via its structures, processes and procedures, implements efficient delivery of its organizations' and Members' objectives, in accordance with FAO principles and best international practices.

Project priorities related to EIFAAC's mandate – development of European inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture – were identified by Members in the Strategic Plan:<sup>23</sup> (1) management-related issues and

<sup>22</sup> The European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) website is available at: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/eifaac/en>.

<sup>23</sup> EIFAAC Strategy Plan for 2012–2016, Twenty-second Session, Hämeenlinna, Finland, 24–26 October 2012. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/static/eifaac/eifaac27/2e.pdf>



principles (for example sustainability, biodiversity and ecosystem management) for inland fisheries and aquaculture; (2) protection and restoration of the fresh water aquatic environment and species; (3) social and economic aspects of inland fisheries and aquaculture; and (4) adaptation of inland fisheries and aquaculture to climate change.

Based on the recommendations adopted at the Twenty-ninth Session of EIFAAC in Stare Jabłonki, Poland (September 2017), the following are priorities for the current intersessional period:

1. Dissemination of EIFAAC information and advice by the European Union through its Common Fisheries Policy Data Collection Framework (DCF) national correspondents and aquaculture contact points is needed.
2. Members' coordination is needed to support an EIFAAC project to identify definitions and indicators on the social and economic valuation of inland fisheries and aquaculture for the region.
3. With EIFAAC acknowledging that climate change is affecting fish, inland fisheries and aquaculture, focused adaptation to climate change needs to begin immediately, and there needs to be consideration of the impacts of climate change on the inland fisheries and aquaculture sector.

## **2. Linkage among the Regional Priorities, Regional Initiatives and the priorities of EIFAAC**

EIFAAC's priorities on management-related issues in inland fisheries and aquaculture and adaptation of the sector to climate change are linked to RI-3 (Strategic Programme 2) on supporting countries in sustainable natural resource management, combating land degradation and desertification, including mitigation and adaptation to climate change and sustainable, climate-resilient natural resource management. The Twenty-ninth Session of EIFAAC was preceded by the EIFAAC Symposium on "Adaption of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture to Climate Change." EIFAAC activities also contribute to RI-1 (SP 1 and SP 2) on supporting smallholder fishers and farmers in Europe for livelihood diversity and rural development, using Europe's freshwater resources in rivers and lakes to support riparian communities through projects on protecting fish habitats (eels working group, invasive species research) and research on the impacts of cormorants on fish farm productivity and fish welfare.

## **3. Contribution of EIFAAC to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals**

The fisheries sector is best reflected under SDG 14 (Life Below Water). FAO is custodian of five target indicators under this SDG (14.4, 14.6, 14.7, 14.b and 14.c). However, the mandate of EIFAAC is limited to freshwater resources, while SDG 14 focuses on seas and oceans.<sup>24</sup>

Inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture contribute to SDGs:<sup>25</sup>

**SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** Solutions to the management issues sought by EIFAAC will contribute to addressing the problem of the low fish consumption in the countries of the Europe and Central Asia region. Global fish consumption per capita in 2016 reached 20.3 kg per year, whereas in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Western Balkans, human consumption of fish is below 5 kg per capita per year, the lowest in the world. This has implications for obesity and heart disease of populations dependent on meat for protein instead of healthier fish and fishery products.

<sup>24</sup> According to the 2018 FAO publication *The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture*, available at: <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture>.

<sup>25</sup> According to the 2018 FAO publication *The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture*, available at: <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture>.



**SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** The World Bank has shown that half of global workers in fisheries and aquaculture value chains are women. They primarily contribute to post-harvest activities such as fish marketing, fish processing, quality assurance laboratories and trade. The research and training provided by EIFAAC contributes to the resolution of gender inequality in the region by providing employment opportunities for women and youth.

**SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** EIFAAC activities are linked to this SDG as sustainable management of water resources in Europe and Central Asia contributes to improving rural livelihoods, especially small-scale fishers in seas and inland waterbodies. Protecting biodiversity and natural resources for future generations also contributes to future employment when stocks are managed sustainably. FAO estimates that inland fisheries are an important source of direct employment and income to an estimated 16.8 to 20.7 million people globally.<sup>26</sup>

**SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water):** By contributing to the development and sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture, the work of EIFAAC contributes to addressing the issues of climate change, namely greenhouse gas emissions, as aquaculture is more environmentally friendly than other forms of meat production (such as beef, pork and chicken). Fuel consumption for inland fisheries in lakes and rivers is typically lower than fuel consumption from commercial marine fisheries in the oceans. Thus, improving the use of local water resources for fish production would be more environmentally friendly than importing ocean fish from stocks that may be overfished or sourced illegally.

**SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):** The work of EIFAAC directly contributes to this SDG because it promotes shared research, capacity building and improved collaboration among member governments (through EIFAAC focal points) and national research institutions to achieve overarching policy goals of improved management of fisheries and aquaculture resources in Europe.

### European Forestry Commission (EFC)<sup>27,28</sup>

#### 1. Main priorities of work of the EFC for 2020–2021 (in general)

The purpose of the European Forestry Commission is to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis, to exchange information and advice (generally through special subsidiary bodies) on suitable practices and action regarding technical and economic problems, and to make appropriate recommendations in relation to the foregoing. The EFC has one subsidiary body – namely the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds – and several associated working groups – namely the UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management – and eight UNECE/FAO teams of specialists.

The EFC has a Regional Programme of Work through the Budapest (FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia) and Ankara (FAO Subregional Office for Central Asia) offices, which includes following priorities:

<sup>26</sup> According to the 2018 FAO publication *The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture*, available at <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture>.

<sup>27</sup> The European Forestry Commission (EFC) website is available at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/efc/en/>.

<sup>28</sup> The report of the joint session of the Thirty-eighth European Forestry Commission and the Seventy-third UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry is available at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/efc/72568/en/>.



- Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia: (i) Ensure sustainable wood mobilization and use of non-wood forest resources, with a view to the increased demand for bioenergy, through providing support to Member Countries in assessing and monitoring forest/tree and wildlife resources. (ii) Strengthen country capacities to deal with increasing threats posed by pest movement in expanded international trade, coupled with local climatic change, and to implement the Guide to implementation of phytosanitary standards in forestry.<sup>29</sup> (iii) Strengthen country capacity to assess and monitor climate change impacts on forests and land resources, and support countries to adapt to climate change and mitigate its impact.
- Subregional Office for Central Asia: (i) Strengthen forest governance (including policy, legal and institutional structures). (ii) Establish an assessment and monitoring system for forest/tree resources. (iii) Foster land-tenure security and forest ownership. (iv) Combat deforestation and degradation of forests caused by fuelwood gathering and livestock grazing. (v) Restore and sustainably manage mountain watersheds and conserve riparian (tugai) forests. (vi) Adapt to climate change and mitigate its impacts on forests and land resources.

In addition, the EFC has an Integrated Programme of Work with the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) through the Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section in Geneva, which included the following work areas for the 2018–2021 period: (i) data collection, monitoring, and assessment (including forest resources assessment and forest statistics); (ii) facilitation of forest policy dialogue and advice; (iii) communication and outreach; and (iv) capacity building.

## **2. Linkage among the Regional Priorities, Regional Initiatives and the priorities of the EFC**

The activities of the EFC in 2018–2019 are aligned to the priorities identified by the Thirtieth Session of the ERC, contributing to the Regional Priority 3 (sustainable management of natural resources under climate change) and REU Regional Initiative 3 (managing natural resources sustainably, under a changing climate).

EFC work priorities contribute to FAO Strategic Objective 2 through outcome 2.1 (Countries adopted practices to increase productivity sustainably while addressing climate change and environmental degradation in agriculture, forestry and fisheries), outcome 2.2 (Countries developed or improved policies and governance mechanisms to address sustainable production, climate change and environmental degradation in agriculture, fisheries and forestry), outcome 2.3 (Countries improved implementation of policies and international instruments for sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry), and outcome 2.4 (Countries made decisions based on evidence for sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry while addressing climate change and environmental degradation) and Strategic Objective 4 through outcome 4.1 (International standards, agreements and voluntary guidelines formulated to improve countries' access to, and functioning of, international markets) and 4.4 (Countries made decisions based on evidence to support agrifood systems development).

## **3. Contribution of the EFC to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals**

EFC works contribute to the implementation of SDG 15, specifically target 15.1, target 15.2, and target 15.4. The EFC also works to contribute to SDG 2, specifically target 2.3, and SDG 7, specifically target 7.2.

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<sup>29</sup> The 2011 Guide to implementation of phytosanitary standards in forestry is available at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/2011-guide-to-implementation-of-phytosanitary-standards-in-forestry/>.

**General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)<sup>30</sup>**
**1. Main priorities of work of the GFCM for 2020–2021<sup>31</sup>**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean adopted the mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries to improve the sustainability of fisheries and ensure that the alarming trend in the status of commercially exploited stocks is reversed. It is based on five targets, which include outputs and actions. The GFCM also adopted the Strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture, which envisages a future for aquaculture in which a level playing field is achieved and the promotion of the sector is ensured so that it is more competitive, sustainable, productive, profitable and equitable. It is based on three targets and associated outputs and activities.

**2. Linkage among the Regional Priorities, Regional Initiatives and the priorities of the GFCM**

Regarding Regional Priorities 1, 2 and 4 and Regional Initiatives 1 and 2, target 2 of the mid-term strategy aims to support livelihoods within sustainable small-scale fisheries. Target 3 of the aquaculture strategy ensures that aquaculture is a flourishing industry and a market-oriented sector and integrated into modern supply chains. Regarding Regional Priority 3 and Regional Initiative 3, targets 1 and 4 of the mid-term strategy aim to increase the existing scientific and socio-economic knowledge in support of fisheries management, to adopt necessary decisions to reverse the current overexploitation rates, and to minimize and mitigate the negative impacts of fisheries on marine biodiversity and ecosystems. Target 1 of the aquaculture strategy ensures that aquaculture is regulated by a sound and functioning system and by the implementation of specific regulations governing the sector, based on transparent, participatory, decision-making mechanisms developed in a consistent way based on maritime and coastal spatial planning principles and integrated with the activities of other coastal users. Target 2 of the aquaculture strategy ensures that aquaculture is integrated into the environment, able to secure health and welfare to farmed aquatic animals and supported by cooperative research and technological development. Target 5 of the mid-term strategy helps to level the playing field for developing countries and to ensure the accrual of socio-economic benefits from the sustainable management of fisheries, while target 3 of the mid-term strategy helps to reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by developing a holistic regional plan of action to fight it.

**3. Contribution of the GFCM to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals**

SDG 14 is of relevance to the management of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture and sets forth targets that advocate for healthy and resilient marine ecosystems, offering substantial guidance as to how challenges to sustainability should be tackled. Other SDGs (2, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17) are also highly relevant in this context. The targets of the mid-term strategy and the aquaculture strategy address the targets of SDG 14 as follows:

Mid-term strategy targets	Aquaculture strategy targets	SDG 14 targets
targets 1, 4	-	target 14.2

<sup>30</sup> General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) website <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/en/>

<sup>31</sup> Report of the Fortieth Session of the GFCM, St Julian's, Malta, 30 May–3 June 2016. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/reports/statutory-meetings/detail/en/c/423828/>.

<b>targets 1, 3</b>		target 14.4
<b>target 4</b>		target 14.5
<b>targets 1, 2, 5</b>	targets 1, 2, 3	targets 14.7, a, b, c

### III. Conclusions

The outline of the priorities and work programmes of the different technical commissions in the region demonstrate the in-depth technical analysis and discussions as well as valuable policy recommendations provided by the commissions to Member States in the region.

Taking into consideration the universality, interconnectedness and indivisibility of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the importance of identifying synergies across the Strategic Programmes, it is recommended that the commissions increase the joint dialogue to ensure synergies where possible and to increase their impacts.

It is also recommended that at country level there is closer interaction among the institutions contributing to the different commissions in order to ensure synergies and harmonization of priority definitions in the region.

As some of the Member Countries in the region are not members of the technical commissions, they are encouraged to consider joining the relevant commissions, as they consider appropriate.

Finally, it may be worthwhile for the GFCM and the EuFMD to consider also reporting to the Regional Conference for Europe. This would allow for the further strengthening of synergy and dialogues among priorities of the commissions and the region.

## Annex I

<b>Strategic Objectives (SO) of FAO<sup>32</sup></b>
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**SO 1:** Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition

**SO 2:** Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable

**SO 3:** Reduce rural poverty

**SO 4:** Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems

**SO 5:** Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises

<b>Sustainable Development Goals – Agenda 2030<sup>33</sup></b>
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**Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere

**Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

**Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

**Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

**Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

**Goal 6:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

**Goal 7:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy for all

**Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

**Goal 9:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

**Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries

**Goal 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

**Goal 12:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

**Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

**Goal 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

**Goal 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

**Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

<sup>32</sup> Medium Term Plan 2018-21 and Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 (page 7) <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ms278e.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> FAO website on SDGs <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/en/>

**Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

**SDG targets and indicators included in the 2018–2021 Strategic Objective results framework<sup>34</sup>**

SDG symbol	SDG reference	SDG Targets contributed to	Number of indicators	Reference to SO (in bold for 3 or more indicators)
	SDG 2	8	13	<b>SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4, SO5</b>
	SDG 1	6	10	<b>SO3, SO5</b>
	SDG 15	5	6	<b>SO2, SO5</b>
	SDG 8	4	4	<b>SO3, SO4</b>
	SDG 13	3	4	<b>SO2, SO5</b>
	SDG 14	4	4	<b>SO2, SO3, SO4</b>
	SDG 10	2	2	<b>SO3, SO4</b>
	SDG 5	1	2	<b>SO3, SO5</b>
	SDG 6	1	2	<b>SO2</b>
	SDG 3	1	1	<b>SO1</b>
	SDG 9	1	1	<b>SO4</b>
	SDG 11	1	1	<b>SO5</b>
	SDG 12	1	1	<b>SO4</b>
	SDG 16	1	1	<b>SO5</b>
	SDG 17	1	1	<b>SO4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>53</b>	

<sup>34</sup> Medium Term Plan 2018–21 and Programme of Work and Budget 2018–19 (Page 12), available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ms278e.pdf>

**Annex II**

<b>Membership Status of the Countries in the Region</b>
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<b>Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)</b>
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Armenia Azerbaijan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan Turkey
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<b>European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)</b>
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Albania Andorra Armenia Austria Azerbaijan Belarus Belgium Bosnia and Herzegovina Bulgaria Croatia Cyprus Czechia Denmark Estonia European Union (Member Organization) Faroe Islands Finland France Georgia Germany Greece Hungary Iceland Ireland Israel Italy Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan	Latvia Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Monaco Montenegro Netherlands North Macedonia Norway Poland Portugal Republic of Moldova Romania Russian Federation San Marino Serbia Slovakia Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland Tajikistan Turkey Turkmenistan Ukraine United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Uzbekistan
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<b>European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD)</b>	
Albania	Latvia
Austria	Lithuania
Belgium	Luxembourg
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Malta
Bulgaria	Montenegro
Croatia	Netherlands
Cyprus	North Macedonia
Czechia	Norway
Denmark	Poland
Estonia	Portugal
Finland	Romania
France	Serbia
Georgia	Slovakia
Germany	Slovenia
Greece	Spain
Hungary	Sweden
Iceland	Switzerland
Ireland	Turkey
Israel	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Italy	

<b>European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)</b>	
Albania	Israel
Austria	Italy
Belgium	Latvia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Lithuania
Bulgaria	Luxembourg
Croatia	Netherlands
Cyprus	Norway
Czechia	Poland
Denmark	Portugal
Estonia	Romania
European Union (Member Organization)	Slovakia
Finland	Spain
France	Sweden
Germany	Switzerland
Greece	Turkey
Hungary	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Iceland	
Ireland	

<b>European Forestry Commission (EFC)</b>	
Albania	Lithuania
Austria	Luxembourg
Belarus	Malta
Belgium	Netherlands
Bulgaria	North Macedonia
Croatia	Norway
Cyprus	Poland
Czechia	Portugal
Denmark	Romania
Estonia	Russian Federation
European Union (Member Organization)	Slovakia
Finland	Slovenia
France	Spain
Germany	Sweden
Greece	Switzerland
Hungary	Turkey
Iceland	Ukraine
Ireland	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Israel	Uzbekistan
Italy	
Latvia	

<b>General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)</b>	
Albania	Lebanon
Algeria	Libya
Bulgaria	Malta
Croatia	Monaco
Cyprus	Montenegro
Egypt	Morocco
European Union (Member Organization)	Romania
France	Slovenia
Greece	Spain
Israel	Syrian Arab Republic
Italy	Tunisia
Japan	Turkey