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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-fourth Session

1-5 February 2021

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE JOINT TASK FORCE FOR INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (JTF 4)

Executive Summary

This background document provides the background information for *COFI/2020/10*, PROPOSAL FOR A NEW SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, and *COFI/2020/10 Add.1*.

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Joint Task Force Meeting for Investigation of Proposal to Establish a New Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (JTF 4)

11:00-12:40, Thursday, 14 January 2021, on Zoom

Present: Annex 1

Discussion:

1. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

The draft provisional agenda was adopted, as attached in **Annex 2**.

2. Introduction of the In-depth Analysis by Japan

The Representative of Japan introduced the In-depth Analysis. The meeting agreed to attach it, as a “non-paper” (**Annex 3**), to the minutes of the meeting, which would be then made available for the 34th Session of COFI (COFI 34) as appropriate.

3. Discussion

(1) The Representative of New Zealand appreciated the efforts of Japan to prepare the non-paper given the significant COVID-19 related work pressures in the latter half of 2020, and noted the paper would positively assist members to consider the range of available options. Despite insufficient time for an in-depth analysis of the paper from the South West Pacific regional group, New Zealand noted in particular that the analysis showed that the terms of reference (TRs) of the existing sub-committees and COFI overlap in many cases, and that overall the paper illustrates that there is some flexibility to address technical fisheries issues between the different fora within the current settings.

(2) The Representative of Canada also appreciated the paper, which provided more analysis. She supported New Zealand about the flexibility in TRs among COFI and sub-committees. She posed a question about what is expected to be agreed by the 35th Session of COFI (COFI 35) on this matter. She noted that the issue of cost was raised in the past in the context of establishing an additional sub-committee and would likely need further analysis. Noting that COVID-19 has resulted in a growing number of international meetings being conducted virtually, she proposed piloting the new sub-committee in the form of several virtual meetings to be held between COFI 34 and COFI 35. The virtual meetings of the new sub-committee would allow for identification of relevant topics that could be discussed, in collaboration with the other COFI sub-committees, allowing members to determine whether there was sufficient material for discussion at the new sub-committee. The results of this pilot would be presented at COFI 35.

(3) The Representative of Iceland also appreciated the Japanese paper. He also supported the holding of trial sessions of the new sub-committee between COFI 34 and COFI 35. He also proposed organizing a back-to-back session to the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade on capture fisheries.

(4) The Representative of the European Union (EU) thanked Japan and underscored the importance to keep momentum to address this matter. He said that he had a sympathy for the Norwegian proposal because the COFI agenda was quite ambitious and already overloaded. He also supported the cost analysis and the trial sessions.

(5) The Representative of the United States of America highlighted the three key aspects of the Japanese paper: (i) useful to see the concrete examples and data to back up the sense that over the years COFI agenda had become longer and more issues, including too many issues for information, but not discusses; (ii) Table 2 showing the Agenda items of each of the bodies, indicated that there were a number of agenda items listed only for COFI, but not for sub-committees; and (iii) the United States of America was flexible in a position on this matter and willing to consider the new sub-committee, particularly given the diversity of topics, and explore the process in a more efficient and focused manner. She also supported the idea of the trial sessions. She also proposed, as the next step, to identify the topics only dealt in COFI but not in the sub-committees as well as the topics for which more in-depth discussion is necessary.

(6) The Representative of Japan appreciated the support expressed by other delegates and expressed the intention of Japan to continue this discussion as the new Chair of COFI, if elected, by creating “Friends of Chair” group after COFI 34. He therefore underscored the importance for COFI 34 to give a clear guidance on the future process. He also pointed out that costs closely tied to the options and therefore it was difficult to gauge without the options.

(7) The Representative of Iceland supported Japan and expressed his hope that COFI 34 would not take much time to discuss this matter, but simply provided mandate for the next Bureau to continue this work under the leadership of Japan.

(8) The Representative of Chile also expressed appreciation to Japan and underscored the importance to have inter-sessional work of the Friends of Chair with the broader participation.

(9) The Secretariat provided some clarification on the cost issue and TRs of SCFT, highlighting that virtual meetings held in the official UN Languages, would still incur substantial translation and interpretation costs. It also proposed another option to create working groups under the existing sub-committees to address the issues of Capture Fisheries, adopting the model used by some Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to address specific technical issues, that would work intersessionally on technical fisheries issues at the direction of COFI. Some members noted that this could be one of the options considered by the Friends of the Chair group, while others pointed out that such working groups are usually set at RFMOs for the purpose of examining a specified technical issue thus could not be applied to this case.

4. Next meeting

It was agreed not to have another meeting as the Joint Task Force prior to COFI 34.

5. Any other matters

No discussion was made under this agenda item.

List of Participants in the 4th Meeting of the Joint Task Force Meeting for Investigation of Proposal to Establish a New Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (JTF 4)

14 January 2021
On Zoom

Bureau Members of COFI 34

Japan (1st Vice-Chairperson from Asia): Mr Hideki Moronuki, Mr Takaaki Umeda, Mr Kento Otsuyama, Mr Naohito Okazoe

Iceland (Vice-Chairperson from Europe): Mr Stefán Jón Hafstein, Mr Kristoffer Bjorklund (Norway)

Chile (Vice-Chairperson from GRULAC): Ms Tamara Villanueva, Ms Karin Mundnich

Jordan (Vice-Chairperson from Near East): Mr Laith Obeidat

Canada (Vice-Chairperson from North America): Ms Renée Sauvé, Ms Katharine Ferri, Mr Benny Guttman,

New Zealand (Vice-Chairperson from Southwest Pacific): Mr Don Syme

Chairpersons of COFI Sub-Committees

Chair of Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (Senegal): Mr Diene Ndiaye

Other Members

Argentina: Mr Guillermo Rodolico

Brazil: Ms Lucianara Andrade Fonseca

Dominican Republic: Ms Julia Vicioso, Ms Diana Infante, Ms Laureano Pena

Ecuador: Mr Juan Tinoco

European Union: Mr Marc Richir, Mr Jorg Roos, Ms Luciana Sarricolea

Lithuania: Mr Ricardas Slepavicius

Mexico: Mr Jose Luise Delgado, Mr Benito Santiago Jimenez, Ms Jessy Denisse Otero

Russian Federation: Mr Victor Vasilier

United Kingdom: Mr Jack Ryan

United States of America: Ms Cheri McCarty, Ms Deirdre Warner-Kramer

Secretariat

Mr Audun Lem (Moderator), Mr Marcio CastroDeSouza, Mr Matthew Camilleri, Ms Nicole Franz, Ms YoonJee Kim, Mr Marcelo Vasconcellos, Mr Hiromoto Watanabe (Secretary of COFI)

(ANNEX 2)

**Provisional Agenda for the 4th Joint Task Force Meeting for Investigation of Proposal to
Establish a New Sub-Committee (JTF 4)**

11:00-13:00, Thursday, 14 January 2021
On Zoom

1. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda
2. Introduction of the In-depth Analysis by Japan
3. Discussion
4. Next meeting
5. Any other matters

NON-PAPER

Draft Comprehensive and In-depth Analysis of the COFI System:

For discussion in JTF 4

Fisheries Agency of Japan

1. Background

The COFI Secretariat provided the Bureau Members with a result of its analysis on the proposal of an establishment of a new subcommittee dealing with capture fisheries responding to the mandate given by COFI 33. With this result, the COFI 34 Bureau and the Joint Task Force (JTF) sought possible options for the establishment of a new subcommittee on capture fisheries, but they were unable to reach a consensus. Due to divergent views among the Bureau Members, the Secretariat decided to provide COFI 34 a document which presents all of the views provided and a possible way forward¹, instead of submitting a specific proposal. In the document, it was concluded that a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the options with a wider participation is needed.

While there was a consensus as to the need for more technical discussion on capture fisheries among the Bureau Members, they did not find that the rigorous need for establishing a new subcommittee on capture fisheries had been provided, which satisfies the criteria² and requested comprehensive and in depth analysis. ¹ During the discussion at JTFs, it was recognized that an analysis of the existing COFI system (the COFI and its two subcommittees) should be made before conducting comprehensive and in-depth analysis and making a final decision.

The Bureau and the JTF realized a complexity behind this issue and a need to address each element step by step in order to move forward. Therefore Japan as the 1st Vice Chair decided to take an initiative to make the process forward and provide results of an in-depth analysis in order to

¹ COFI/2020/10. "PROPOSAL FOR A NEW SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT." Accessed on 2 November 2020 at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7688en/ca7688en.pdf>

² See the paragraphs 22-23 of Annex 3 to COFI/2020/SBD1 (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7667en/ca7667en.pdf>) and the paragraph 33 of Annex 3 to COFI/2020/SBD2 (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7668en/ca7668en.pdf>)

complement the information provided by the Secretariat for forthcoming discussion at COFI 34 and beyond.

It should be noted that this analysis is:

- building on all the analysis which were already presented at the past JTF meetings
- not intending to provide any options, but to provide a neutral analysis which responds to the outstanding questions in the JTF and the Bureau and ultimately guides a discussion as to whether establishing a new subcommittee is the best option to address our concern.

In particular, among the questions described in the paragraph 1 of the evaluation for the proposal to establish a subcommittee on capture fisheries³, this analysis answers the following questions:

- 1) Further analysis is required on the problems with existing COFI meeting
- 2) Relationship with RFMOs.

However, this analysis doesn't intend to answer the remaining questions in the evaluation paper:

- 3) Further clarity on the role and scope of the new subcommittee,
- 4) Further analysis required for each option against the criteria for creation of new statutory bodies, and
- 5) Costs.

Further to the above, this analysis is able to respond to the additional questions/comments raised during the JTF and Bureau meetings:

- 6) Whether COFI has dealt with strategic AND/OR technical discussion, and
- 7) the need to review COFI agenda to investigate appropriateness of the recent new agenda that makes COFI agenda more pressing in time.

This paper aims to clarify implications of the current COFI system for the efficiency in responding to the increasing number of subjects in the fisheries sector and thereby consider a way to secure a space for technical discussion on capture fisheries irrespective of creating a new sub-committee.

³ Annex 3 to COFI/2020/SBD3 (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7669en/ca7669en.pdf>). The non-paper posed the following questions: 1) Further clarity on the role and scope of the new subcommittee, 2) Relationship with RFMOs, 3) Further analysis is required on the problems with existing COFI meeting, 4) Further analysis required for each option against the criteria for creation of new statutory bodies, and 5) Costs.

2. Analysis

What are concerns in the COFI system?

The following concerns were raised by Norway⁴.

- It is recognized that we need to strengthen COFI's ability to influence global policy development in fisheries and aquaculture and allow FAO to enhance its role as the leading global arena for normative discussions of living marine resources.
- There is a lack of strategic discussion at COFI on capture fisheries. We need to focus more on strategic topics such as MYPOW and FAO's Programme of Work.

Norway further pointed out that the above concerns have arisen in the following cases.

- COFI agenda is too crowded to secure spaces for strategic discussion.
- There is a lack of technical discussion as a basis of strategic discussion on matters for capture fisheries.

With regards to the second bullet point, Norway illustrated the following examples where technical discussion would create a basis for strategic discussion.

(Example 1)

FAO needs to play up the concept of OECM and discuss it in the context of the discussion at CBD more in depth. Strategic use of the OECM concept needs technical knowledge, e.g. the number or types of MPA respect to fishing gear type, duration of application, etc.

(Example 2)

COFI needs to focus more on the implementation with existing tools to realize changes on the ground. There are already many tools developed by FAO and COFI needs strategic discussion on how to improve the implementation with these tools. Technical discussion is required for identifying guidelines and best practices and for mapping how they have been implemented and what impact they have, and for identifying problems for further implementation.

(Example 3)

⁴ See Annex 4 to COFI/2020/SBD1 (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7667en/ca7667en.pdf>). "A concept note on how a separate subcommittee on fisheries management can strengthen FAO/COFI", March 2019 prepared by Norway.

Technical discussion in cross-sectoral and horizontal topics is required, for example food loss, trade, poverty, user rights, etc. The outcome can be raised for strategic discussions in COFI with a broad yet technical sound basis.

Questions to be answered in the in-depth analysis

In order to cope with the concerns mentioned above, Japan prepared and submitted to BM6 a working paper for JTF4, and BM6 identified the scopes of analysis: (1) mandates and agendas of the COFI system; (2) technical/strategic discussion in the COFI system; and (3) interaction with outside the COFI system. Based on these scopes, the following questions are to be clarified through this analysis:

(1) Mandates and agendas of the COFI system:

- review the Terms of Reference of COFI and its subcommittees
- review the meeting agendas of COFI and its subcommittees
- analyze how expertise were demarcated among the COFI and its subcommittees, especially between the COFI and its subcommittees

(1-1) What are the mandates of COFI and its two subcommittees? Are there any distinction between the COFI and its subcommittees at the mandate level?

(1-2) What are the agenda items in the recent COFI system? Analyze with their mandates. Any overlaps? How are they divided among three?

(1-3) How are the agenda items getting crowded? What is the change in recent years? Any rooms to shorten the agenda?

(1-4) What experts participate in COFI and its subcommittees to deal with the agenda items? Are the experts different among them?

(1-5) What is the current process of agenda setting in COFI and its subcommittees?

(2) Technical/strategic discussion in the COFI system:

- review interactions among COFI and its subcommittees
- review how strategic and technical discussion have been addressed in the COFI system

(2-1) What do technical and strategic discussion mean in the context of COFI?

(2-2) How do COFI and its subcommittees interact?

(2-3) What kind of strategic discussion is held in COFI at agenda items such as the Programme of Work and MYPOW?

(3) Interaction with outside the COFI system:

- review interaction with RFMOs/RFBs
- review interaction with other international organizations

(3-1) How does COFI interact with RFMOs/RFBs? How have the RFMOs/RFBs contributed to the discussion in the COFI system? How can we strengthen the relationship between COFI and RFMOs/RFBs and how can we avoid overlaps between in the work of COFI and RFMOs/RFBs?

Analysis: Mandates and agendas of the COFI system

(1-1) What are the mandates of COFI and it's two subcommittees? Are there any distinction between the COFI and it's subcommittees at the mandate level?

The texts of the ToRs (Box 1) indicate that what makes distinctions among the three fora is the scope. According to the ToRs, their scope can be described as follows:

COFI: fisheries and aquaculture in general

SCFT: trade and market-related matters excluding aquaculture-specific matters

SCAQ: aquaculture-specific matters

The evaluation of proposal to establish a subcommittee on capture fisheries describes that the subcommittees have the following common objectives in their Terms of Reference stressing technical profile applicable to fish trade and aquaculture respectively⁵:

- to identify and discuss major issues and trends
- to perform periodical reviews, analysis and produce outlooks
- to promote discussion of specific programs and possible solutions based on special studies
- to discuss suitable measures to promote related activities particularly to improve the participation of developing countries
- to recommend international actions to address specific issues
- to promote harmonization and endorsement of policies and actions as appropriate, and
- to advise on the strengthening of international cooperation to assist developing countries.

⁵ Paragraph 13 of Annex 3 to COFI/2020/SBD3. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7669en/ca7669en.pdf>

Given the above, it can be concluded that the main difference between COFI and the subcommittees other than the presence of decision making power are as follows:

- COFI has a mandate of reviewing Programs of Work in the field of fisheries, but the subcommittees doesn't
- COFI has a mandate of addressing specific issues upon the request of the Council or DG
- COFI has a mandate of considering items related to international convention

While higher emphasis is placed on the technical profile on the subcommittees than on COFI, there should be allowed some flexibility between them as to the level of discussion on each profile (i.e., strategic or technical discussion). This aspect is addressed in detail in the question (2-1).

(1-2) What are the agenda items in the recent COFI system? Analyze with their TORs. Any overlaps? How are they divided among three?

Comparison of the agenda items among COFI, SCFT and SCAQ gives insights as to how they could be interlinked and independent each other. As described in the evaluation of proposal to establish a subcommittee on capture fisheries, the agenda of COFI is usually composed of three components, i.e. procedural items, standing items and (thematic) issues⁶. Table 1 shows the relevance of the Agenda items in the COFI system for each of the above components.

Comparison of agenda items between SCFT and SCAQ indicates that agenda items have been allocated to them with some flexibility because both ToRs maintain a general nature. For example, "supply of aquaculture products" and "traceability" were mainly discussed in SCFT, while "certification" was discussed in both SCFT and SCAQ, depending on the contexts. Even if SCFT and SCAQ have different agenda items from those of COFI, they can be a part of a broader agenda of COFI. For example, "SSF in trade and market" (SCFT) and "Guidelines for sustainable aquaculture development" (SCAQ) are relevant to SSF agenda of COFI. Thus, some of the agenda items of SCFT and SCAQ are interlinked so that results of discussion at the two fora finally contribute to a specific agenda of COFI.

Comparison of agenda items between COFI and SCFT indicates that many of the agenda of SCFT are closely linked to capture fisheries, in particular product legality, certification, traceability, CITES

⁶ Paragraph 16 of Annex 3 to COFI/2020/SBD3. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7669en/ca7669en.pdf>

and social sustainability. These items have been discussed with an aim of providing trade-, product- and social-related means or conditions for achieving fisheries sustainability. This poses us a difficulty in making clear distinction between the roles of COFI and SCFT. It can be said that SCFT addresses issues mainly related to post-harvest, but sticking solely to this distinction would not work because some issues, such as traceability and social sustainability can be more effectively addressed in a discussion on a cross-sectoral matter regardless of pre- or post-harvest.

Close analysis of agenda items of SCFT indicates that agenda items of the SCFT cover the following aspects among which some overlaps exist:

- economic aspects: “market overviews” such as international trade (price, supply, demand, fisheries services, logistics, etc),
- environmental and economic aspects: “sustainable fisheries” such as product legality, certification, traceability and CITES,
- health and environmental aspects: “product-focused market access” such as safety, quality, product legality, certification and traceability, and
- social aspects: “employment of fishers” such as sustainable working condition in fisheries operations and seafood value chains (social sustainability).

Several aspects naturally coexist within one agenda item and it is impractical to deal with only one aspect in one agenda item. Among the agenda items of SCFT, those which have some aspects of sustainable fisheries and employment of fishers (e.g., product legality, traceability, certification, CITES, working condition) might be able to be addressed in a broader context of capture fisheries. Because SCFT addresses both technical and strategic aspects, representatives in SCFT require not only technical expertise in relation to post-harvest, but also the strategic expertise in relation to policy making on capture fisheries. This indicates a possibility that some mismatch could have occurred between representatives and the agenda items of SCFT.

Box 1. ToRs of COFI, SCFT and SCAQ

ToR of COFI

1. Review the work programmes of the Organization in the field of fisheries, and their implementation;
2. Conduct periodic general reviews of international fishery problems and examine possible solutions through national, FAO and intergovernmental programmes;

3. Review specific matters relating to fisheries referred to the Committee by the Council or the Director-General, or placed by the Committee on its Agenda at the request of Member Nations in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Committee, and to make recommendations as may be appropriate;
4. Consider the desirability of preparing and submitting to Member Nations an international convention under Article XIV of the Constitution to ensure effective international cooperation and consultation in fisheries on a world scale;
5. Report to the Council or tender advice to the Director-General, as appropriate, on matters considered by the Committee.

ToR of SCFT

1. periodic reviews on the situation and outlook of principal fishery commodity markets covering all factors influencing them;
2. on the basis of special studies, discussion of specific fish trade problems and possible solutions;
3. discussion of suitable measures to promote international trade in fish and fishery products and formulation of recommendations to improve the participation of developing countries in this trade, including trade-related services
4. in conjunction with the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, formulation of recommendations for the promotion of international quality standards and the harmonization of quality control and inspection procedures and regulations;
5. consultation and formulation of recommendations for economically viable fishery commodity development, including processing methods, the upgrading of products and production of final products in developing countries.

ToR of SCAQ

1. identify and discuss major issues and trends in global aquaculture development;
2. determine those issues and trends of international importance requiring action to increase the sustainable contribution of aquaculture to food security, economic development and poverty alleviation;
3. recommend international action to address aquaculture development needs and, in this regard:
 - to advise on mechanisms to prepare, facilitate and implement action programmes identified, as well as on the expected contribution of partners;

- to advise on the liaison with other relevant groups and organizations with a view to promoting harmonization and endorsing policies and actions, as appropriate;
 - to advise on the strengthening of international collaboration to assist developing countries in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
4. advise on the preparation of technical reviews and of issues and trends of international significance address any specific matters relating to aquaculture referred to it by its Members, the Committee on Fisheries or the Director-General of FAO.

Table 1: Agenda of the COFI system in the last three sessions. Similar agenda items are combined.

	COFI (2014, 2016, 2018)	SC-FT (2016, 2017, 2019)	SC-AQ (2015, 2017, 2019)
Standing items (reporting)	SOFIA	Recent trade agreement	
	Rep of COFI-FT	Overview FAO's work	Rep of SC-FT
	Rep of COFI-AQ	Rep of SC-AQ	
	Global/regional processes (FAO's work with IOs)	Work with IOs	FAO's work
		Global theme	
	CCRF	CCRF (trade part)	CCRF (aquaculture part)
Standing items (Strategies)	COFI Programme of Work		
	COFI MYPOW		
Issues (thematic)	SSF (updates of FAO's activities)	SSF	Guidelines sustainable aquaculture development
	IUU (updates of FAO's activities)	Product legality: Global Record, PSM, IUU	
		Traceability, transparency, certification (inc. aquaculture)	Aquaculture certification
		Social sustainability	Decent employment
		Globe Fish/Fish Info (2019)	Data improve statistics
		CITES	Genetic resources

		Trade in fisheries services	
		Food quality and safety-related market access (2006- 2018)	Animal disease
		Food waste/loss (2017)	
		MPA (2017)	
		Impact of aquaculture supply to trade and consumption	
			Innovation
			Raising the contribution of COFI-AQ
Issues (cross cutting)	Climate change	Climate change (2017)	
	SDGs/Agenda 2030		SDGs agenda 2030
	Biodiversity		
	Nutrition		

Note: The evaluation by FAO classified the agenda items as “Standing items”, “Issues” and “Procedure”. We excluded “procedure” items from the analysis. Cross-cutting themes are defined in FAO’s Strategic Framework (2017): Climate Change, Nutrition, Governance, Gender, and Human rights. Biodiversity is also commonly considered as cross-cutting theme.

(1-3) How are the agenda items getting crowded? What is the change in recent years?

In order to accurately analyze how the agenda items have got crowded, we need to look not only at the agenda items but also at the number of information papers because there is a shared recognition that COFI and its subcommittees have upper limits on the number of its agenda items, and some topics have been “crowded out” to information documents when there were too many topics to be discussed or followed under the provided agenda items. Tables 2 and 3 shows recent trends of agenda items and information documents respectively.

Fig. 1-1 and Table 2 show that the number of items both in “standing items” and “(thematic) issues” has increased in the last decade. For the “standing items”, new agenda items such as “global regional processes” or “ocean governance” were added in order to report FAO’s work in a global and regional ocean context under independent agenda item respectively. For “(thematic) issues”, “cross-cutting issues” have increased, since there seems to be increasing demand to highlight cross-cutting items in COFI since 2009.

Table 3 shows the dramatic increase of the number of information documents in the last three sessions, indicating an occurrence of “crowding-out”. The number of information documents increased both on fisheries and cross-cutting issues, and also increased with regards to updates and supplements on voluntary guidelines. Development of voluntary guidelines and other similar normative work was traditionally addressed in COFI during the 2000s, but such normative work has been crowded out from agenda items and shifted to information documents particularly in the last two COFI sessions.

In short, it is observed that COFI recently has been facing an increasing time pressures due to 1) reporting updates of FAO’s work in relation to the ever complicating global and regional ocean context and 2) needs for addressing emerging cross-cutting issues. Crowded out agenda items which traditionally were addressed in COFI has resulted in the increase of the number of information documents.

This trends have been accelerated in the last three sessions of COFI. Discussion for Agenda 2030 and SDGs had been initiated since 2012 in response to a call by the declaration “The Future We Want” at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio and subsequently a number of ocean and cross-cutting agenda items have arisen both within and outside the fisheries sector. These trends have

further put influences on FAO's work through the reflection of some SDGs targets in FAO's strategic framework since 2017.

Fig. 1-1. Number of agenda items of the COFI plenary meetings in the last 10 years.

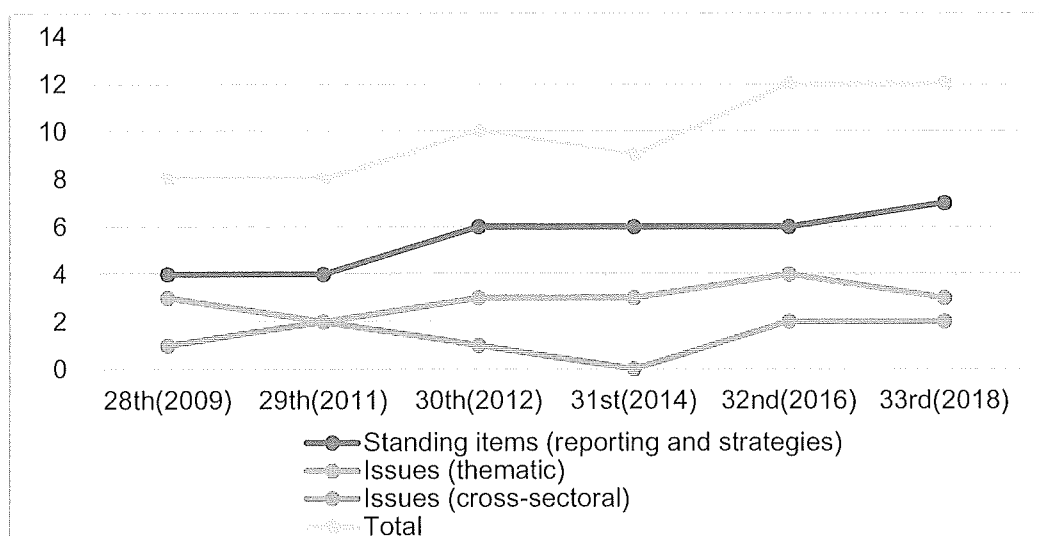


Table 2. Agenda of the COFI plenary meetings in the last 10 years.

	28th	29th	30th	31st	32nd	33rd
	2009	2011	2012	2014	2016	2018
Standing items (reporting and strategies)			World Fisheries and Aquaculture: Status, issues and needs	Status of world fisheries and aquaculture and implementation of CCRF	Status of world fisheries and aquaculture and implementation of CCRF	Status of world fisheries and aquaculture
	FAO's Programme of Work	FAO's Programme of Work	FAO's Programme of Work	FAO's work under the Strategic Framework	FAO's Programme of Work under	FAO's Programme of Work under

					Strategic Framework	Strategic Framework
			MYPOW	MYPOW	MYPOW	MYPOW
	Report of 11th COFI-FT	Report of 12th COFI-FT	Report of 13th COFI-FT	Fish trade-Report of 14th COFI-FT: CDS	Report of 15th COFI-FT: CDS	Report of 16th COFI-FT
	Report of 4th COFI-AQ	Report of 5th COFI-AQ	Report of 6th COFI-AQ	Report of 7th COFI-AQ: AGGP programme	Report of 8th COFI-AQ	Report of 9th COFI-AQ
				Global and regional processes and instruments	Global and regional processes-UN, RFB, Climate Change matters	Fisheries and Ocean governance : regional ocean processes
	Progress CCRF, IPOA and strategy	Progress CCRF, IPOA and strategy	Progress CCRF, IPOA and strategy			Progress CCRF
Issues (thematic)	Combatting IUU fishing, including through PSM and GR	Progress IUU fishing, inc.PSM, flag state performance, market measures, GR	Major developments from the last COFI- IUU fishing	Global and regional processes and IUU instruments: Flag state performance	Combatting IUU fishing	Fisheries and Ocean governance : Combatting IUU fishing

				, progress PSMA)		
	Securing sustainable SSF	Good practices in the governance of SSF	Major developments from the last COFI- SSF guidelines	SSF- SSF guidelines, Global Assistance Programme	SSF- Global Conference on Inland Fisheries, Tenure and Fishing Rights 2015, IYAFA	Fisheries and Ocean governance : SSF
	Deep Sea Fisheries in High seas					
				Inland fisheries		
					WFU proposal	
			Any other matters- combatting piracy		Any other matters	Any other matters
Issues (cross- sectoral)	Climate Change and fisheries and aquaculture	Climate Change- adaptation and mitigation				Climate Change and other environmental matters

		Integration of fisheries and aquaculture, biodiversity, environmental protection				
			Ocean Governance Rio+20			
					Food security and nutrition, inc. Food losses and waste	
						2030 agenda

Table 3. COFI Information Documents in 2014, 2016 and 2018

2014	Document #	Titles
Regular topics	COFI/2014/Inf.1/Rev.2	Provisional list of documents
	COFI/2014/Inf.2	Provisional list of participants
	COFI/2014/Inf.3	Statement by the Director-General
	COFI/2014/Inf.4/Rev.1	Annotations/Guide Notes on Agenda Items
	COFI/2014/Inf.5	Follow-up to the decisions and recommendations of the Thirtieth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 9-13 July 2012
	COFI/2014/Inf.6	Report of the Thirtieth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 9-13 July 2012
	COFI/2014/Inf.7	Report of the Fourteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee

		on Fish Trade, Bergen, Norway, 24-28 February 2014
	COFI/2014/Inf.8	Report of the Seventh Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 7-11 October 2013
	COFI/2014/Inf.11	Regional Fishery Bodies established within FAO framework
	COFI/2014/Inf.14	Safety at sea in the fisheries sector
	COFI/2014/Inf.15/Rev. 1	Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments
	COFI/2014/Inf.17	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Union and its Member States
updates-fisheries	COFI/2014/Inf.9	Achievements of Fisheries and Aquaculture Programmes 2012-2013
	COFI/2014/Inf.12/Rev. 1	The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record)
	COFI/2014/Inf.13	An update of FAO's work in support of capacity development and implementation of the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards

2016	Document #	Titles
Regular topics	COFI/2016/Inf.1/ Rev.1	Provisional list of documents
	COFI/2016/Inf.2	Provisional list of participants
	COFI/2016/Inf.3	Statement by the Director-General
	COFI/2016/Inf.4	Annotations/Guide Notes on Agenda Items
	COFI/2016/Inf.5	Follow-up to the decisions and recommendations of the Thirty-first Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 9-13 June 2014
	COFI/2016/Inf.6	Report of the Thirty-first Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 9-13 June 2014
	COFI/2016/Inf.9	Report of the Fifteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Agadir, Morocco, 22-26 February 2016
	COFI/2016/Inf.11	Report of the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Brasilia, Brazil, 5-9 October 2015
	COFI/2016/Inf.16	Regional Fishery Bodies established within the FAO framework
	COFI/2016/Inf.8	Safety at sea in the fisheries sector
	COFI/2016/Inf.7	Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments
COFI/2016/Inf.23	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Union and its Member States	
updates-fisheries	COFI/2016/Inf.12	The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record)
	COFI/2016/Inf.13	Towards implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)
	COFI/2016/Inf.14	The Rome Declaration: ten steps to responsible inland fisheries
	COFI/2016/Inf.21	FAO's considerations regarding UNFSA's issue of reporting distinctly catches inside and outside the EEZs
	COFI/2016/Inf.22	Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of COFI
	COFI/2016/Inf.25	International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture

updates- cross-cutting	COFI/2016/Inf.15	Advancing Knowledge on Rights-based Approaches for Fisheries: A global work programme for enhancing food security and nutrition, poverty eradication and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
	COFI/2016/Inf.17	Discussion paper on STRATEGY FOR FAO'S WORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE
	COFI/2016/Inf.18	FIA Strategy for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Climate Change for 2017-2020
	COFI/2016/Inf.20	Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals and fisheries and aquaculture
	COFI/2016/Inf.24	Mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors
Guidelines, expert/technical consultation	COFI/2016/Inf.19	Expert Consultation on Gear Marking

2018	Document #	Titles
Regular topics	COFI/2018/Inf.1	Provisional list of documents
	COFI/2018/Inf.2	Provisional list of participants
	COFI/2018/Inf.3	Statement by the Director-General
	COFI/2018/Inf.4	Annotations/Guide Notes on Agenda Items
	COFI/2018/Inf.5	Follow-up to the decisions and recommendations of the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 11-15 July 2016
	COFI/2018/Inf.6	Report of the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 11-15 July 2016
	COFI/2018/Inf.9	Report of the Sixteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Busan, the Republic of Korea, 4-8 September 2017
	COFI/2018/Inf.13	Report of the Ninth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Rome, 24-27 October 2017
	COFI/2018/Inf.20	Regional Fishery Bodies established within the FAO framework
	COFI/2018/Inf.8	Safety at sea in the fisheries sector
COFI/2018/Inf.7	Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for	

		Responsible Fisheries and related instruments
	COFI/2018/Inf.32	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Union and its Member States
updates- fisheries	COFI/2018/Inf.11	Towards social sustainability in fishery value chains
	COFI/2018/Inf.12	The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
	COFI/2018/Inf.14	Summary of the Report of the Second Session of the Committee on Fisheries Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies
	COFI/2018/Inf.15	Report of the Second Session of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
	COFI/2018/Inf.29	Development in fora of importance for the mandate of COFI
	COFI/2018/Inf.16	Report on the first meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing, Oslo, Norway, 29-31 May 2017
	COFI/2018/Inf.17	Progress by FAO and partners concerning the implementation of the SSF Guidelines since the Thirty-second Session of COFI in 2016
	COFI/2018/Inf.18	Progress in improving the information baseline and assessment of the contribution of small-scale fisheries in marine and inland waters
	COFI/2018/Inf.26	Bycatch and discards: Global and regional updates
	COFI/2018/Inf.27	The use of best available science in developing and promoting best practices for trawl fishing operations in southeast Asia/Latin America/Africa
updates- cross- cutting	COFI/2018/Inf.19	Progress regarding the Global Work Programme to Advance Knowledge on Rights-based Approaches for Fisheries (GWP)
	COFI/2018/Inf.21	Scaling Up Agroecology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals: Outcomes of the 2nd International Symposium and way forward
	COFI/2018/Inf.22	United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025: Opportunities for fisheries and aquaculture to contribute to

		healthy diets and improved nutrition
	COFI/2018/Inf.23	Climate Change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO in fisheries and aquaculture (Biennial Theme)
	COFI/2018/Inf.28	Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture
Guidelines, expert/technical consultation	COFI/2018/Inf.30	Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear
	COFI/2018/Inf.10	Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes
	COFI/2018/Inf.31	Microplastics in fisheries and aquaculture: A summary of FAO's study
	COFI/2018/Inf.25	Report of the Technical Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear
	COFI/2018/Inf.24	Addressing environmental issues during fishing operations: Progressing towards the 2025 reduction of ALDFG

(1-4) What experts participate in COFI and its subcommittees to deal with the agenda items? Are the experts different among them?

It is difficult to precisely identify the expertise of representatives in COFI, SCFT and SCAQ from their participants list due to a lack of detailed information (department level or division level) in it.

We therefore conducted a minimum analysis on expertise of representatives in accordance with the names of ministries or institutes which they belong to (Figs.1-2, 1-3 and 1-4). Results shows that:

- it was common among the three fora that most representatives were from fisheries or ocean related ministries and that the diversity in ministries or institutes has increased over the years.
- in SCFT, there were the most diversities in ministries or institutes among the three;
- in SCAQ, there were less diversities than in SCFT in ministries or institutes, but more representatives from ministry of environment and research institutes participated in.

In the last three sessions of SCFT, 43 Members attended on average. On average, nine Members sent representatives who had “trade”, “market”, or “economics” in their titles

Fig. 1-2. Origin of representatives (names of ministry/institute) in the last three sessions of COFI.

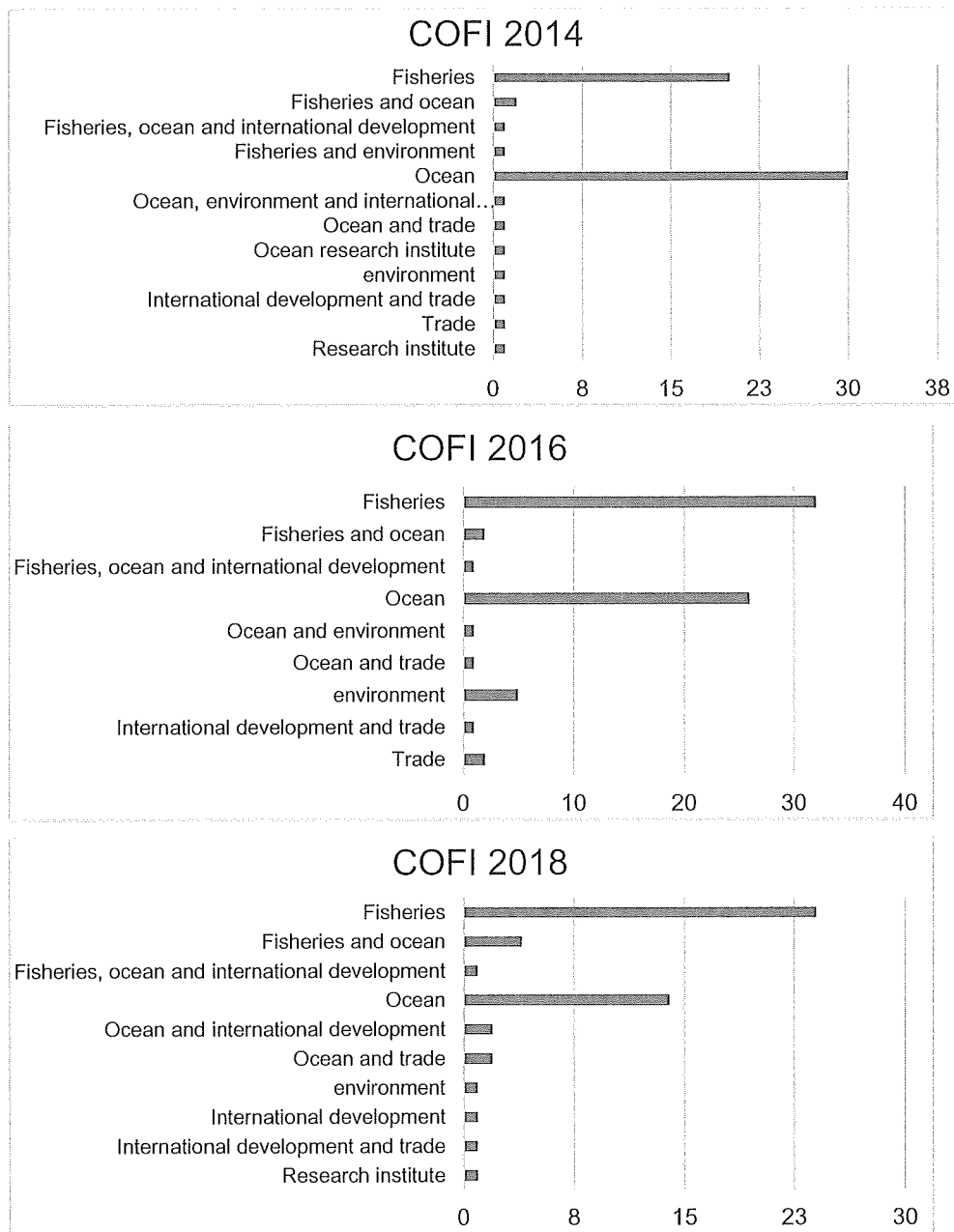


Fig. 1-3. Origin of representatives (names of ministry/institute) in the last three sessions of SCFT.

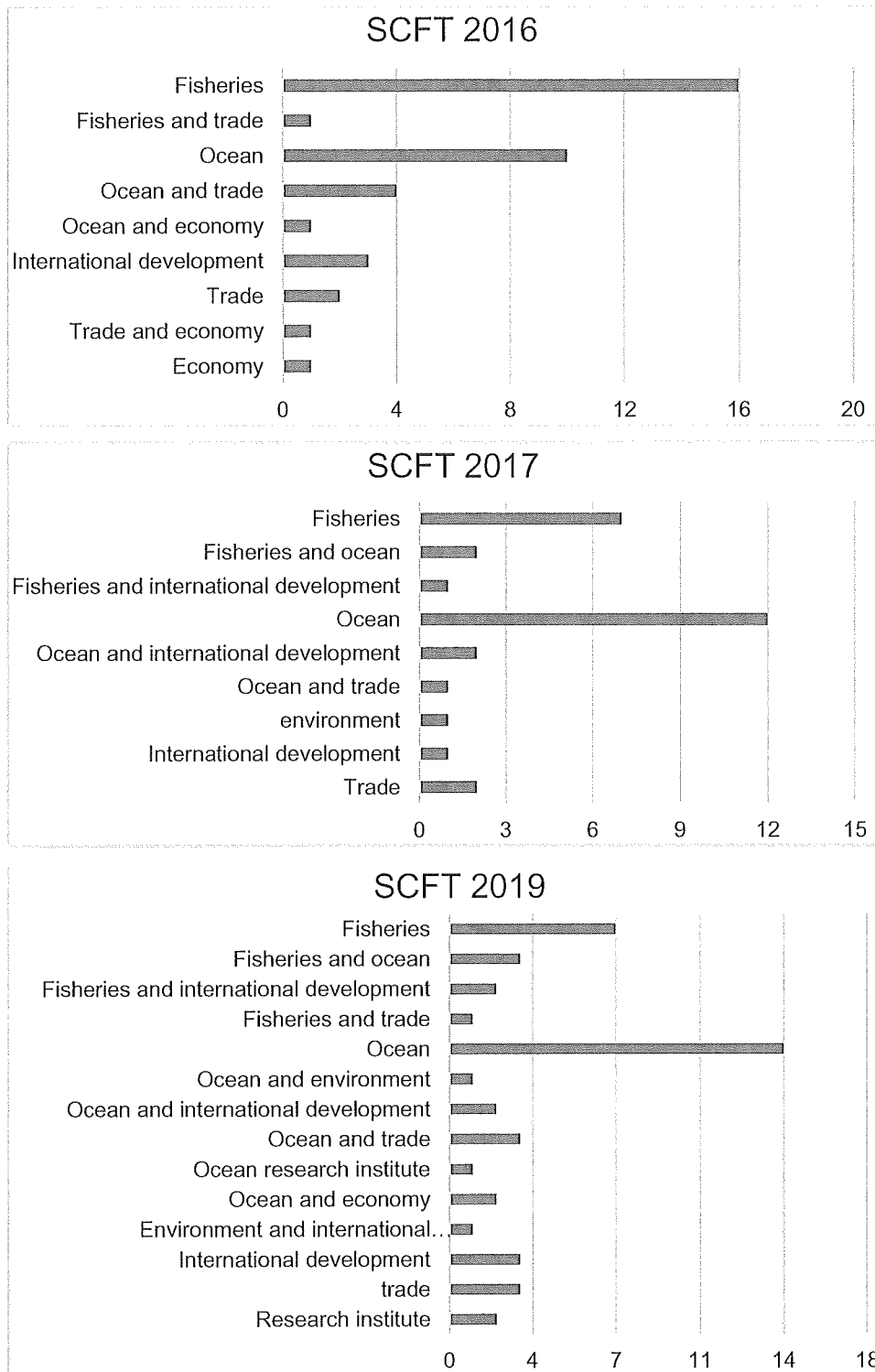
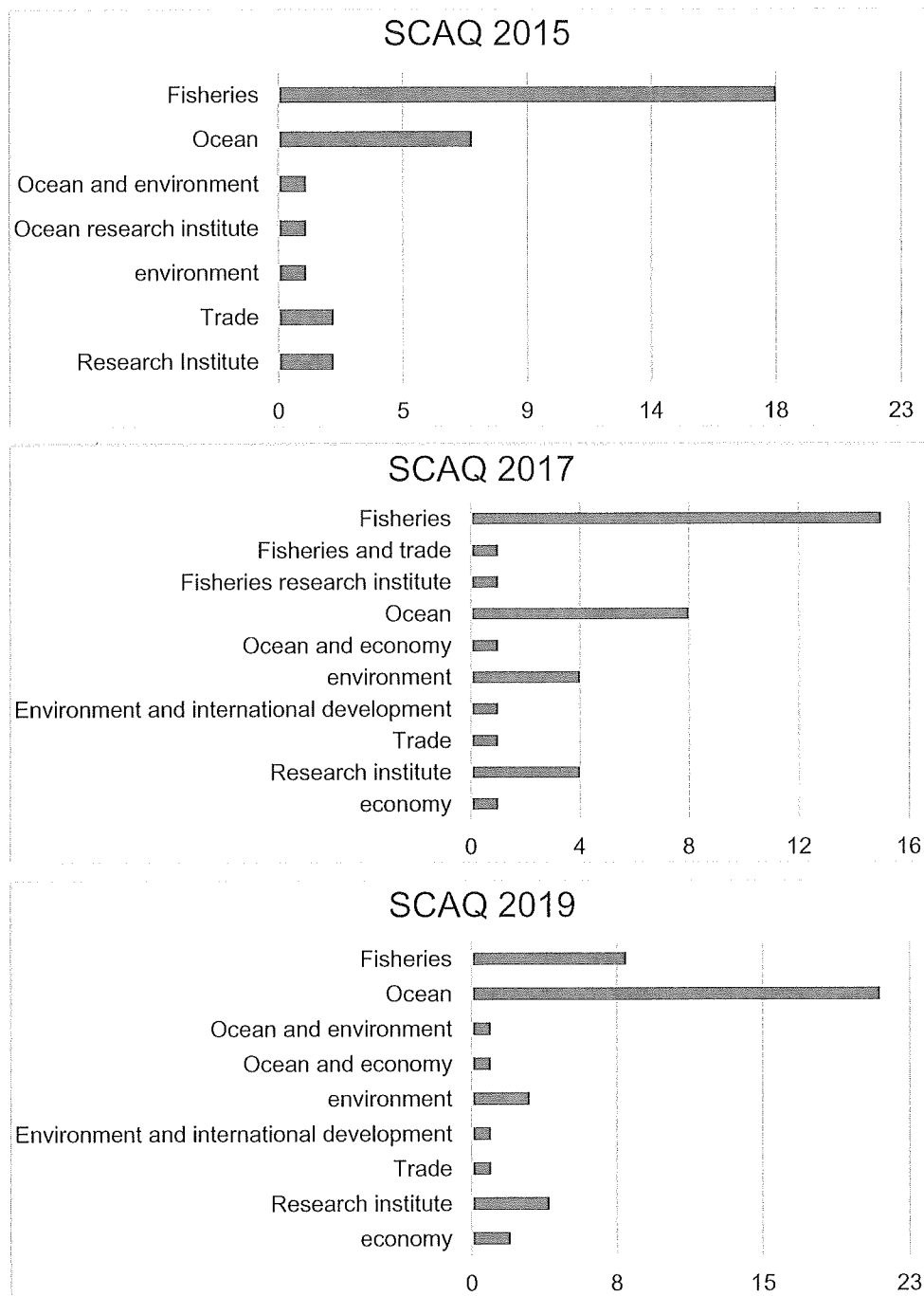


Fig. 1-4. Origin of representatives (names of ministry/institute) in the last three sessions of SCAQ.



(1-5) What is the current process of agenda setting in COFI and its subcommittees?

According to the Rule IV, 1, Rules of Procedure of COFI, the Director-General, in consultation with the Bureau through the Chairperson of the Committee, shall prepare a provisional agenda. The Bureau is actively involved in agenda setting, and COFI introduced the current practice taking into consideration of the external advice ⁷ and a series of the subsequent discussion in FAO's Conference, Council and COFI.

The Bureau starts discussing agenda items of COFI from April in the previous year of the COFI meeting and spends nearly a half year to agree on a final draft for a clearance by the DG. There is an opportunity for the DG to maintain the latest perspectives of the FAO management in the agenda and ensure the consistency of the agenda with FAO's strategies. Then, the DG sends out the revised draft agenda to the COFI Chairperson to seek for the agreement by the Bureau.

Analysis: Technical/strategic discussion in the COFI system

(2-1) What does technical and strategic discussion mean in the context of COFI?

Technical committees have several roles: firstly developing global information exchange, policy coherence and instruments for their area of competence; and secondly providing recommendations to the Council and Conference on the Strategy and Programme of the Organization. Technical Committees deal with global issues as well as FAO's programme and will report directly to the FAO Conference on global issues and to the Council on FAO programme priorities and performance. ⁸

It is not easy to define the relationships among various concepts such as technical, strategic, and policy discussion. However, it might be generally categorized as follows (Table 4) ⁶:

- Technical discussion: finds and/or creates a basis of technical work by FAO and its Members.
- Strategic discussion: identifies 1) global issues which are strategically framed so that FAO and its Members can respond thereto; 2) strategies how FAO and its Members can utilize relevant tools generated by the technical work in order to respond to those global issues.

⁷ Report of Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO (2007).
<http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/meeting/012/k0827erev1.pdf>

⁸ Immediate Plan of Action (2008). <http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/meeting/014/k3701e.pdf>

- Policy discussion: develops policy tools to address global issues.

In the work of FAO, normative and operational activities are strategically involved and they are complementary continuum of work. The main differences are not matters of one versus another, but rather of different points of priority emphasis on the continuum.

Table 4. Types of technical work and tools used by FAO. Best use of the existing tools requires strategic discussion.

FAO's technical work	Tools relevant to the technical work
Policy development	Normative instruments (CCRF, technical guidelines, best practice guidelines, etc)
Capacity building	Normative instruments (CCRF, technical guidelines, best practice guidelines, etc)
Statistics and basic data	SOFIA, GR, FishInfo, etc
Legislation and international agreements	UNFSA, UN Compliance Agreement, CCRF, PSMA, etc
Field level piloting	
Advocacy	SDGs, UN Decade, International Days, etc
Emergencies and rehabilitations	

Note: "FAO's technical work" are identified as priorities of Members. "Tools generated by the technical work" was added by the author.

There is no mentioning of "strategic" or "technical" in the three ToRs except for the paragraph 4 of the ToR for SCAQ (Box 1). Instead, the following descriptions are found in each ToR;

COFI: "review of problems and solutions"; "make recommendations";

SCFT: "review fishery commodity markets"; "discuss fish trade problems and solutions";
 "make recommendations for participation and commodity development in fish trade";
 "make recommendations for Codex";

SCAQ: "identify issues and trend in aquaculture"; "recommend international action by advising mechanism for international action programmes and collaboration"; "advise on technical reviews"; "address specific matters".

The texts of the ToRs (Box 1) indicate that technical and strategic discussions are allowed at all three fora. What makes distinctions among the three is not the level of technicality nor strategy, but the focus areas (see the question (1-2)). Therefore, we have made an analysis on the interaction among the three fora from both technical and strategic aspects.

(2-2) How do COFI and its subcommittees interact?

Main interaction we have found is the endorsement of subcommittee reports by COFI. Upon the endorsement, specific items identified and/or recommended by the subcommittees are often discussed according to the members' concerns or interests.

Another interaction is the development of normative products such as technical guidelines in COFI and subcommittees. One example is the interaction between COFI and SCFT (Box 2.) for developing the CDG guidelines as follows:

- SCFT (2014) took note of an offer to finance an expert consultation in line with terms of reference to be agreed by COFI in response to the needs to address a call relating to catch documentation schemes made by the UNGA resolution on Sustainable Fisheries. It also took note of six principles to apply to the schemes ⁹.
- COFI (2014) welcomed the offer by Norway and recognized that FAO would undertake to elaborate guidelines and other relevant criteria relating to catch documentation schemes based on the six principles ¹⁰.
- The Expert Consultation on Catch Documentation Schemes was subsequently convened by FAO in 2015, tasked with developing draft voluntary guidelines for catch documentation schemes, in accordance with the six principles. ¹¹ SCFT in February 2016 agreed that the report of the expert consultation (2015) should constitute the starting point for the deliberations at the upcoming Technical Consultation and encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that the Technical Consultation scheduled for April 2016 strictly following the COFI 31 mandate and aligning with the six principles identified at COFI 31 ¹².

⁹ Report of the 14th session of SCFT (2014). <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3709t.pdf>

¹⁰ Report of the 31st session of COFI (2014). <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4634e.pdf>

¹¹ Report of the expert consultation on catch documentation schemes (2015). <http://www.fao.org/3/i5063e/i5063e.pdf>

¹² Report of the 15th session of SCFT (2016). <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5580t.pdf>

- Technical Consultations on Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes were held in April 2016 and July 2016 just before COFI Session in 2016.
- COFI in July 2016 authorized the Technical Consultation to resume its session, finalize the Guidelines and submit the Guidelines to the FAO Conference in July 2017 for final adoption¹³. Technical Consultations were held right after COFI Session in 2016 and in April 2017.
- Conference in July 2017 adopted the CDS guidelines, which was elaborated by the technical consultation because COFI did not meet in 2017 but was planned in 2018¹⁴.

In short, technical discussion was initiated based on the mandate and principles given by COFI. Development of the technical discussion was overseen and managed by SCFT under the mandate and principles. The outcome of technical discussion as a form of the draft guidelines was put forward for adoption at the Conference in 2017 because no COFI session was planned in the year.

The analysis shows that SCFT mainly dealt with technical aspects of the CDS guidelines, while COFI took a role of endorsing the CDS guidelines as the final product. In this case, strategic guidance was prepared at the initial stage by the UNGA resolution which eventually delegates the preparation of a technical guidance to COFI.

Box 2. Excerpts relating to CDS guidelines from the reports of COFI and SCFT

SCFT (2014)

- The Secretariat introduced the agenda item with reference to the UN General Assembly Fisheries Resolution's call for FAO work on catch documentation schemes and to document COFI:FT/XIV/2014/7 Sup.1.
- Some Members noted the usefulness of catch documentation schemes in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and highlighted the need for technical assistance and capacity building in the implementation of such schemes.
- The Sub-Committee took note of an offer to finance an expert consultation on catch documentation schemes in line with terms of reference to be agreed by COFI for such work. The Sub-Committee took note of the following principles to apply to catch documentation schemes: a) be in conformity with the provisions of relevant international law; b) not create unnecessary barriers to trade; c) equivalence; d) risk-based; e) reliable, simple, clear and transparent; and f) electronic if possible.

¹³ Report of the 32nd session of COFI (2016). <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr484e.pdf>

¹⁴ Report of the 40th session of the Conference of FAO (2016). <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu208e.pdf>

COFI (2014)

- Took note of paragraph 68 of the UN General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries of 9 December 2013 on catch documentation and welcomed the offer by Norway to support the convening of an Expert Consultation on this issue.
- Recognized that FAO would undertake to elaborate guidelines and other relevant criteria relating to catch documentation schemes, including possible formats, based on the following principles: a) conformity with the provisions of relevant international law; b) not create unnecessary barriers to trade; c) equivalence; d) risk-based; e) reliable, simple, clear and transparent; and f) electronic if possible, aiming for adoption at the thirty-second session of the Committee of Fisheries. The assessment of schemes and formats would include cost-benefit considerations and take into account catch documentation schemes already implemented by certain Members as well as by RFMOs.

SCFT (2016.2)

- The Sub-Committee agreed that COFI:FT/XV/2016/Inf.7 should constitute the starting point for the deliberations at the upcoming Technical Consultation aimed at finalizing the Guidelines for CDS together with the following considerations that proper attention be given to technical assistance,
- The Sub-Committee encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that the work of the Technical Consultation scheduled for April 2016 strictly follows the COFI 31 mandate for CDS Guidelines and be aligned with the six principles identified at COFI 31.

COFI (2016.7)

- authorized the Technical Consultation on Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (TC: CDS) to resume its session, finalize the Guidelines and submit the Guidelines to the FAO Conference in July 2017 for final adoption;

SCFT (2017)

- After the introduction by the Secretariat of COFI:FT/XVI/2017/7, the Sub-Committee welcomed the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS) by the FAO Conference in July 2017,
- The Sub-Committee, while noting the importance of many of the components included in the proposed Global Assistance Programme, recommended that the establishment of a separate programme for this purpose is premature. The Sub-Committee suggested that at a future stage, FAO can inform on best practices based on national and regional implementation experiences.

COFI (2018)

- The Committee welcomed the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation

Schemes (CDS) by the FAO Conference in July 2017, and encouraged their implementation to harmonize CDS and prevent trade in products from IUU fishing while minimizing TBTs.

(2-3) What kind of discussion is held in COFI at agenda items such as the Programme of Work and MYPOW?

COFI document for FAO's Programme of Work highlights the priorities of FAO's Fisheries/Aquaculture Department and seeks guidance from Members for the next two years.

On the other hand, COFI document for MYPOW highlights the work of COFI, not of FAO, for the four year duration. Therefore the nature of MYPOW is different from FAO's Programme of Work, as MYPOW focuses on the governance of COFI, which relates, for instance, to effective agenda-setting and ways to support FAO's Programme of Work.

Given these differences, enhanced technical discussion on capture fisheries will contribute to strategic discussion in FAO's Programme of Work, not to MYPOW. Discussion in FAO's Programme of Work could strategically point out the necessity of technical advice for better implementation of prioritized FAO's Programmes.

In the agenda of MYPOW in the previous three sessions of COFI, there have been limited discussion. This indicates this agenda item doesn't activate forward-looking discussion by Members. Only two essential recommendations have been made since the introduction of MYPOW in 2012: one is identification of clear indicators and targets and the actors to implement them ¹⁵; the other is a request of exploring the possibility of integrating a roadmap, covering a period of at least three COFI sessions, in future MYPOWs ¹⁶.

The recommendation made in COFI 33 could allow for discussion for effective governance of COFI, such as by attaching draft agenda items for the next three sessions to MYPOW and reviewing them at every session. MYPOW was introduced in 2012 in response to the FAO's Immediate Plan of Action ¹⁷ taking account of the recommendations by the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO, and

¹⁵ Paragraph 9, Report of the 31st session of COFI (2014). <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4634e.pdf>

¹⁶ Paragraph 123, Report of 33rd session of COFI (2014). <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5184en/ca5184en.pdf>

¹⁷ Immediate Plan of Action (2008). <http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/meeting/014/k3701e.pdf>

IEE originally envisaged that MYPOW serves as a rolling strategic plan or flexible agendas for tackling global governance issues (Box 3).

Box 3. Recommendations by the IEE (Report of IEE, 2007)

751. Recommendation 4.4: There is always going to be a degree of unpredictability in the way international issues arise and become important for member countries from a global governance perspective. But the Governing Bodies need to prioritize those areas where FAO is going to be proactive in developing the global consensus:

- a) based on a study and review of the global food and agriculture situation and the state of the world's legal frameworks on it and fully involving the technical committees of the Council, the Governing Bodies should develop a rolling strategic plan for tackling global governance issues (see also Recommendation 4.1). Criteria for this flexible agenda will include the extent of global significance for food and agriculture and the dependent populations and the extent to which other governing bodies are prepared to partner (the Codex Alimentarius Commission provides an example of such partnering). The capacity of the FAO Secretariat to support the discussion and the capacities of the Governing Bodies themselves will also be critical;
- b) in some cases, FAO should take an early initiative, aware that parts of the discussion are likely to become the eventual prerogative of others. For example, bio-energy is an area where FAO could play a major governance role; on those parts of the debate most impinging on trade, leadership would be likely to move to the WTO. The whole area of climate change is likely to be one in which Governing Bodies, not just the Secretariat, must be proactive but for the most part as a junior partner; and
- c) the Governing Bodies, not just the Secretariat, should seek partnerships on specific issues more often.

(3-1) How does COFI interact with RFMOs/RFBs? How have the RFMOs/RFBs contributed to the discussion in the COFI system? How can we strengthen the relationship between COFI and RFMOs/RFBs and how can we avoid overlaps between in the work of COFI and RFMOs/RFBs?

The improvement of COFI's work should consider how to strengthen the relationship of FAO with RFMOs/RFBs and to avoid overlaps with them.

While there is no direct relationship between RFMOs and the COFI process¹⁸, FAO serves as secretary to the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN), and the outcome of the biennial meeting of RSN is simply reported to COFI by the chair of the RSN, who is an observer representing one of inter-governmental organizations. It should be noted that although most of the members of RSN are fisheries management bodies, there are also a number of aquaculture organisations¹⁷.

The most important aspects of RFMOs/RFBs is their contribution to regional fisheries management with their working and collaboration at the appropriate ecosystem scale¹⁹. Their scale merits can be recognized both in FAO's normative work and implementation work.

In the area of normative work, RFMOs/RFBs have contributed to technical discussion in developing standards such as guidelines (e.g. Guidelines for estimate of IUU magnitude), and also contributed to agenda setting of COFI in a way that they engage in discussion at international fora outside FAO, such as BBNJ process and fisheries subsidies negotiation at WTO.

In the area of implementation, RFMOs/RFBs have played significant role such as for the implementation of provisions of PSMA (such as compiling IUU vessel list, establishing regional port state measures and the cooperation with Global Capacity Development Programme), and for the collection of various statistics.

In order to avoid an overlap of work and strengthen the collaboration, FAO needs to listen to RFMOs/RFBs voices and utilize an opportunity at the occasion of COFI for this purpose. For example, RSN expected FAO to address strengthening joint financial mechanism in the global scale to address increasingly complicated and difficult issues in fisheries and aquaculture sector¹⁸. Creation of a mechanism to listen to such voices more often in the COFI system is definitely useful.

3. Key findings

At the mandate level, there are significant overlaps among the three fora: COFI, SCFT and SCAQ. This overlap is rather considered a wisdom to allow for flexibility in choosing fora for strategic and

¹⁸ See the paragraphs 25-28 of Annex 3 to COFI/2020/SBD3. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7669en/ca7669en.pdf>

¹⁹ See "COFI 33 – STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF RSN-7 AGENDA ITEM 8.3", Appendix 4 to Report of the SEVENTH MEETING OF REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK, <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5108en/CA5108EN.pdf>

technical discussion irrespective of topics. COFI can address any issues related to fisheries as the mother body. While SCFT and SCAQ address issues relating to post-harvest and aquaculture respectively, there still exist some overlaps between the two. COFI's feature which distinguishes itself from the subcommittees is its mandate to review FAO's Programs of Work in the field of fisheries and to address specific issues upon the request of the Council or DG as well as its authority to make a decision.

At the agenda level, the agenda has got crowded especially in the COFI due to the need for updates of FAO's work in global ocean context and the need for addressing cross-cutting issues. Since the COFI can address only a limited number of agenda items, this trend has made other topics crowded out from its agenda and hence to be treated as for information only, resulting in the recent increase of the number of information documents.

At the substance level, SCFT and SCAQ have been addressing both strategic and technical aspects, which contributes to saving time in COFI by allowing Members to simply adopt reports and identify specific issues that require further discussion in COFI. While COFI puts more efforts on strategic aspects and the subcommittees do so on technical aspects, there are no rigid rules as to what type of discussion they should have in each fora, thus the COFI system has taken a liberty of the flexibility.

At the agenda and substance level, agenda items of SCFT can be generally grouped as follows: 1) market overviews, 2) sustainable fisheries, 3) product-focused market access, and 4) employment of fishers, while several aspects coexist within one agenda item. Among them, agenda items falling in the "sustainable fisheries" and "employment of fishers" groups (e.g., product legality, traceability, certification, CITES, working condition) could be addressed in a broader context of capture fisheries. Because SCFT addresses both technical and strategic aspects, representatives in SCFT usually require not only technical expertise in post-harvest, but also broad expertise in policy making in capture fisheries.

At the participants level, while the low attendance of high-level representatives at COFI needs to be addressed, potential mismatch between its agenda items and expertise of representatives is also considered a concern. Expertise of representatives in SCAQ seems to be less diverse than those in SCFT if considered from names of ministries representatives belong to. It should be noted however representatives in SCAQ include also those sent from ministry of environment and research institutes. There was little distinction between COFI and SCFT as far as names of ministries that representatives

belong to are concerned, but we could draw no conclusion therefrom as to whether their expertise are different from each other because of a lack of information at the department/division level.

With regards to the interaction within the COFI system, in particular between COFI and SCFT, the analysis of steps to finalize CDS guidelines showed that SCFT mainly dealt with technical aspects, while COFI took a role of endorsing the guidelines as the final product. In this case, strategic guidance was prepared at the initial stage by the UNGA resolution which eventually delegates the preparation of a technical guidance to COFI.

With regards to the interaction with outside the COFI system, while RFMOs is recognized as inter-governmental organizations and some of them are established under the provisions of Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, there is no direct relationship between RFMOs and the COFI process in terms of their mandate. FAO serves as the Secretary to the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN), but the outcome of the RSN biennial meeting is reported to COFI by the chair of the RSN. The most important aspects of RFMOs/RFBs is their contribution to regional fisheries management and ecosystem conservation. Their scale merits are usually recognized both in FAO's normative and implementation work. RFMOs/RFBs has also contributed to technical discussion in developing normative products and implementing them at sea. In order to avoid overlap of work and strengthen the collaboration, FAO needs to listen to RFMOs/RFBs voices and utilize opportunities of the COFI for this purpose.

4. Implications for future discussion

While the interpretation of these findings depends on Members, it could be concluded that the above mentioned key findings have the following implications as to the way for maximizing efficiency of the COFI system to secure time and space for technical discussion on capture fisheries.

Discuss whether COFI system could reduce its agenda items and how it could be done so. There has been little discussion among Members as to which items should be treated as an agenda item or can serve just for information. COFI Bureau would be the best place for a preliminary discussion.

Discuss in detail how technical aspects on capture fisheries can be effectively and better addressed through the existing fora, i.e. SCFT and SCAQ, which has a possibility to allow for more time and space for strategic discussion at COFI.

Discuss whether it is possible to arrange agenda items throughout the COFI system. A possible way forward would be the stronger involvement of Members in the elaboration of MYPOW, especially through the stronger engagement by the Bureau in the preparation process.

5. References

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