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Analysis of Member country responses to the 2018 FAO questionnaire on implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)

In 2018, as part of the CCRF reporting process, a global CCRF questionnaire was conducted with responses received from 128 countries. In addition, 33 Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and 11 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) also took part in the 2018 questionnaire.

In the Asia-Pacific region responses were received from a total of 25 countries, including 14 APFIC Members.

The 2018 CCRF questionnaire covered ten topics associated with the CCRF, plus improved reporting on the UN SDGs indicators and the Aichi Targets and reporting on the abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear issue. The topics covered in the 2018 CCRF questionnaire were:

- a. Relevance of the Code's objectives;
- b. Fisheries management plans and measures in member countries;
- c. Countries' measures to control fishing operations within and outside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ);
- d. Aquaculture development in member countries;
- e. Integration of fisheries into coastal area management;
- f. Post-harvest practices and trade;
- g. Fisheries research;
- h. Implementation of International Plans of Action (IPOAs) and Agreements;
- i. Small-Scale Fisheries;
- j. Constraints and suggested solutions.

The results of the questionnaire are tabulated by FAO into 83 tables. The APFIC Secretariat has summarized these tables and combined these data thematically, to facilitate the presentation of the APFIC Member country responses. These responses of Asia-Pacific countries are organized into three tables: to capture fisheries (Table 1), aquaculture (Table 2) and post-harvest (Table 3).

Table 1: Summary of responses to 2018 CCRF questionnaire Asia-Pacific issues in capture fisheries

Fishery issue	APFIC member country responses
Binding Agreements	<p>The <u>APFIC members</u> which are parties to principal international binding instruments. The following numbers are ratifications of the 21 APFIC members and 41 Asia-Pacific countries, or countries with territories, in the Asia-Pacific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (19 APFIC members; 37 Asia-Pacific Countries) • 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement (19 APFIC members; 36 Asia-Pacific Countries) • 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement (14 APFIC members; 29 Asia-Pacific Countries) • 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures (15 APFIC members; 20 Asia-Pacific Countries)
Fishery management plans	<p>Most responding APFIC member countries reported that management plans for their specific fisheries are in place and that these plans are largely considered implemented at the national level.</p> <p>Within 14 responding countries, there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 270 specific management plans for marine capture fisheries (note that some of these may overlap in the case of shared stocks) • 45 specific management plans for inland capture fisheries.
The ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF)	<p>Many Asia-Pacific countries responded to have already started implementing the EAF in some capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 of the 15 responding APFIC member countries have started to implement EAF. • The establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, was lower than establishment of management objectives and addressing of key issues.
Stock-specific target reference points (TRP)	<p>Of the 13 APFIC member countries that responded, 77 percent stated that they have developed systems for reporting on specific stocks.</p> <p><u>TRP have been developed for 776 stocks/multi-species stocks/resources (note there may be double-counting in the case of shared stocks). The volume of catch they represent is unknown.</u></p> <p><u>Of these TRPs, 70% are reported to have been exceeded.</u></p> <p>Three APFIC countries that have not developed TRPs reported having indicators other than stock-specific target reference points; these primarily involve catch and effort or socio-economic indicators.</p>
Data for fishery management	<p>Out of 12 APFIC members responding, there are 664 stocks which have reliable data available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This represents 71-80% of key national stocks (note that there may be overlapping counts of these stocks). It is unclear if this information is publicly available or submitted to FAO <p>Of the 10 countries that specifically collect data on SSF,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 countries collect SSF catch data • 8 countries collect SSF employment data <p>13 out of 15 responding APFIC members report data gaps for management of fishery resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 report gaps in stock status data • 5 have gaps in catch data (SSF as well as LSF) • 4 have gaps in effort data (SSF as well as LSF) • 5 have gaps in ecosystem data

Fishery issue	APFIC member country responses
Control fisheries operations within their exclusive economic zones	<p>Most APFIC member countries (93%) have responded to have taken steps to address this issue. This is primarily through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of their coastal state controls and MCS • Improved legal frameworks (79%) • The existence of a vessel register (64%). • 50% reported deterrent penalties and sanctions. <p>Logbooks and reporting (29%) and linking vessel registrations and licensing (36%) were less widely implemented.</p> <p>NPOA-IUU development and implementation and strengthening port state measures were relatively low (7%)</p> <p>Of 14 countries responding to questions regarding foreign flagged vessels in their national waters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 members authorize such vessels to use their ports • 5 members such vessels to operate/fish in waters within its national jurisdiction
Fishing capacity	<p>13 out of 15 responding APFIC member countries identified fishing overcapacity as a problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 (of 11 responding members) have developed an NPOA-Capacity • 11 have limited entry regimes • 5 have freeze on current total number of licenses/vessels • 4 have a freeze on new acquisitions • 5 have public buy-back or decommissioning schemes • 4 have schemes for vessels transfer or reconversion • 4 have capacity-oriented rules for vessel replacement <p>Management measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 have seasonal closures of particular fisheries • 8 have Technical restrictions on vessels and gear • 5 have spatial closures and/or conservative/precautionary TACs and quotas • 3 have limitations on the number of fishing days
Combatting IUU-fishing	<p>16 APFIC members have developed an NPOA-IUU</p> <p>14 out of 15 responding countries consider IUU fishing is a problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 have improved coastal State controls and MCS • 11 have improved legal framework • 5 have improved port State control measures
Vessel monitoring systems (VMS)	<p>Out of 15 responding APFIC members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 report implementation of VMS systems. • 12 report partial implementation of VMS. • 1 does not implement VMS
Control of flagged fishing vessels beyond national jurisdiction	<p>13 of 15 responding APFIC members have taken measures including mandatory authorization fish outside EEZ.</p> <p>Less emphasis is on enhancing MCS (58%), ratification of relevant instruments (50%), mandatory logbooks and reporting (50%).</p> <p>Enforcing compliance with laws of other States, and RFMO decisions was rather low (17%)</p> <p>6 APFIC members have flagged vessels that are authorized to operate in the waters of another State.</p> <p>11 of the 15 responding APFIC members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flag vessels fishing on the high seas • Supply a record of their fishing vessels operating on the high sea.

Fishery issue	APFIC member country responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 APFIC members have flagged vessels that are authorized by another State to operate in the High Seas. <p>Only 5 have Undertaken an assessment of their performance as a flag State (Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance).</p>
Conflicts in fisheries	<p>For 14 responding APFIC members, reported level of fishery conflicts were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between coastal and industrial fisheries: Strong (4); Moderate (5), Light (4) Between different gears in coastal fisheries: Strong (4); Moderate (4), Light (5) Between fisheries and coastal aquaculture: Strong (1); Moderate (3), Light (7), None/not applicable (3) Between fisheries and ports, mineral extraction: Strong (2); Moderate (4), Light to none (8) <p>Conflict resolution mechanisms were in place in 12 of the countries reporting conflicts</p>
Small-Scale Fisheries	<p>Out of 14 responding APFIC member countries small-scale fisheries (SSF) on average, account for 41-50 percent of the total production; both in terms of quantities and value. SSF account for 61-70% of total fishery employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) are legally defined in 5 countries SSF Informally defined in 5 countries SSF undefined in 4 countries <p>With respect to implementing attainable initiatives related to the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).</p> <p>Of 14 responding countries; 11 countries have policies , 9 have strategies, 8 have laws and/or regulations that specifically target or address the SSF sector 6 countries have a specific initiative to implement SSF guidelines with emphasis on supporting SSF actors to take a greater role in management and enhance the value of their catch</p>
By-catch and discards	<p>Where bycatch and discards occur in major fisheries 73% of APFIC members responded that management action was taken.</p> <p>73% monitor this, and in these cases up to 82% of the bycatch and discarding is considered to be unsustainable.</p> <p>Sharks: of 15 responding APFIC members, 9 have fisheries where shark are targeted or caught as bycatch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 9 members have conducted an assessment for the need of a shark plan and concluded that an IPOA was needed. Of 9 responding APFIC member countries, 6 members have developed an NPOA-Sharks, although the other 3 members intend to. The 6 members countries report that their plan implementation is close to fully implemented. <p>Seabirds: 12 APFIC members engage in longline fisheries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 have conducted an assessment for the need of an IPOA-seabirds, 4 concluded that an IPOA was needed. Of these, 3 members have developed an NPOA-Seabirds; 7 members have observer programmes; 4 have technical measures/lures; 3 deploy longlines at night; 2 have seabird avoidance plans and mandatory release of birds 4 members have no seabird bycatch mitigation measures in place
ALDFG and/or ghost gear	<p>Less than 3% of 15 responding countries acknowledged this is a concern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four APFIC countries reported active collection of information on fishing gear loss.

Fishery issue	APFIC member country responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 53% reported requirements for gear marking.• Gear marking was mainly painted/written on gear (88%), with limited (<25%) tagging/electronic tagging, stamping (13%) or colouring of rope yarn (13%).• 27% had observer programmes that included ALDFG/ghost gear reporting.• 47% reported requirements for fishing vessel port waste facilities

Table 2: Summary of responses to 2018 CCRF questionnaire Asia-Pacific issues in aquaculture

Aquaculture issue	APFIC member country responses
Aquaculture development	Between 50 to 70 percent of the responding Asia-Pacific countries have completed enabling policies, legal or institutional frameworks that guide aquaculture development at the national level.
Development or adoption of a code or instrument of best practices for aquaculture	<p>Of 15 responding countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87% had government schemes • 67% had producer and/or manufacturer schemes • 60% had supplier schemes • 40% had other unspecified schemes
Effectiveness of procedures in place to undertake core activities for responsible development of aquaculture	<p>Environmental assessments of aquaculture operations (13 member responses): 3 highly effective, 10 improvement needed</p> <p>Monitoring of aquaculture operations (13 members responses): 3 highly effective, 10 improvement needed</p> <p>Minimizing harmful effects of alien species introductions (14 members responses): 5 highly effective, 9 improvement needed</p> <p>Key areas to improve across all three issues were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening institutional and technical capacity • Increasing periodicity of monitoring • Strengthening legal framework • Broadening scope of monitoring <p>Other issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction of costs of monitoring/assessment , development of databases • improved research on impacts of invasive species and development of contingency plans
Promotion of responsible aquaculture practices in support of rural communities, producer organizations and fish farmers	<p>93% of 15 responding APFIC members take some action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57% report extension programmes • 50% report access to credit or grant facilities • 50% report improvements to market access information • 36% provide assistance to producer organizations • 43% rehabilitate degraded ecosystems <p>There was limited action in regard to : Improved access to feed supplements and other inputs (14%); creation of an enabling investment climate (7%), Improving access to land and titles (7%), and binding stakeholders into aquaculture planning processes (7%)</p>
Integrated coastal zone management	<p>Complete and enabling policy, legal and institutional frameworks have been put in place by less than 50% of the 15 APFIC countries responding (i.e. countries with a coastline).</p> <p>The remaining have reported partial development of frameworks.</p>

Table 3: Summary of responses to 2018 CCRF questionnaire Asia-Pacific issues in post-harvest

Post-harvest and trade issue	APFIC member country responses
Effective food safety and quality assurance systems for fish and fisheries products	Less than two-thirds of Asia-Pacific countries have developed an enabling food safety and quality assurance system related to fish and fisheries products.
Reducing post-harvest losses	<p>Post-harvest losses and waste were reported to be a problem by all reporting APFIC member countries.</p> <p>The primary measure to minimize post-harvest loss through regulations, codes, HACCP and standard operating procedures. Monitoring/control/inspections, by-product value addition, awareness raising/capacity building and improving infrastructure were considered slightly less effective.</p>
<u>Improved use of bycatch</u> in fish processing, distribution and marketing	<p>This issue was relevant to 14 out of 15 responding countries. The most effective actions identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding Research and Development programmes and/or pilot projects • Improvement of handling infrastructures & conservation facilities <p>Fostering adoption of new processing techniques and technology</p> <p>Slightly less effective were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising and training / dialogue with processors • Strengthening relationship between producers, processors and distributors
Controlling illegal fishery trade	<p>14 out of 15 reporting countries consider that elimination of processing and trading in illegally harvested fisheries resources was relevant to them.</p> <p>Measures taken by the reporting countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 have enhanced fisheries control and inspections • 8 are implementing NPOA-IUU and/or NPOA-Sharks • 5 are implementing product traceability systems • 4 have enhanced customs and border controls • 4 have tougher sanctions
Traceability	<p>14 out of 15 reporting countries reported that fish processors were in a position to trace the origin of the fisheries products they purchase.</p> <p>6 of the responding countries reported that consumers were able to do so in an effective/meaningful manner.</p>