



COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

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PROGRESS REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES (CCRF) PROVISIONS RELEVANT TO AQUACULTURE AND CULTURE-BASED FISHERIES IN THE CONTEXT OF BLUE TRANSFORMATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 seeks to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind. Under better production, the 'Blue Transformation' Programme Priority Area provides a vision for FAO's work on aquatic food systems for the period 2022–2030. The roadmap for Blue Transformation recognizes the importance of aquatic food systems as drivers of employment, economic growth, social development and environmental recovery, all contributors to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This working document provides an update on the efforts made by FAO towards implementing the Blue Transformation roadmap, and a progress report on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) Aquaculture Questionnaire.

Suggested action by the Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee is invited to:

- Acknowledge the update of the Blue Transformation roadmap on sustainable aquaculture development and the update on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries Aquaculture Questionnaire;
- Note and comment on the options suggested by the Secretariat to improve Members' participation in the CCRF questionnaires and provide further guidance; and

- Provide further guidance on its improvement in relation to the Blue Transformation roadmap and on the preparation of a progress report.

BLUE TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

1. After decades of improvement, the number of undernourished people in the world has been rapidly growing, with over 800 million in 2021 suffering from hunger and 2.4 billion with severely limited access to adequate food.¹ The challenge of feeding a growing population without exhausting our natural resources continues to rise. In this context, aquatic food systems are increasingly considered for their potential to help meet nutritious food requirements for a larger proportion of humanity.

2. Recognizing the importance of aquatic food systems, as well as the need to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable aquatic food systems, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) developed a Blue Transformation roadmap,² to align, coordinate and guide its work on fisheries and aquaculture for the period 2022–2030. This roadmap aligns with the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture (the Declaration)³ and FAO’s Strategic Framework 2022–31.⁴

3. FAO’s Blue Transformation promotes innovative approaches that expand the contribution of aquatic food systems to food security and nutrition and affordable healthy diets, by preserving aquatic ecosystem health, reducing pollution, protecting biodiversity and promoting social equitability. Blue Transformation focuses on sustainable aquaculture expansion and intensification, effective management of all fisheries, and upgraded value chains.

4. Sustainable aquaculture intensification and expansion satisfy global demand for aquatic food and distributes benefits equitably. There are five targets identified:

- Target 1: Effective global and regional cooperation, planning, and governance enhance aquaculture development and management;
- Target 2: Innovative technology and management support the intensification and expansion of sustainable and resilient aquaculture systems;
- Target 3: Equitable access to resources and services delivers new and secures existing aquaculture-based livelihoods;
- Target 4: Aquaculture operations minimize environmental impacts and use resources efficiently;
- Target 5: Regular monitoring and reporting of the growth and the ecological, social, and economic impacts of aquaculture development.

5. Implementation of the Blue Transformation roadmap requires holistic and adaptive approaches that consider the complex interaction in agrifood systems and support multistakeholder interventions using existing and emerging knowledge, tools and practices to secure and maximize the contribution of aquatic food systems to global food security and nutrition.

6. The Thirty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) welcomed the core objectives of Blue Transformation and their alignment with the Declaration and FAO’s Strategic Framework, and recognized the relevance of the Blue Transformation Programme Priority Area to transform global

¹ www.fao.org/publications/sofia/2022/en/

² www.fao.org/3/cc0459en/cc0459en.pdf

³ www.fao.org/3/cb3767en/cb3767en.pdf

⁴ www.fao.org/3/cb7099en/cb7099en.pdf

aquaculture into a more productive, efficient, resilient, climate smart and socially and environmentally responsible agrifood system.

LINKS BETWEEN BLUE TRANSFORMATION AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

7. Implementing the Blue Transformation roadmap requires effective global and regional cooperation, planning, governance, technology and information sharing, as well as an enabling environment for sustainable aquaculture development. It also involves the monitoring and reporting of the state and the ecological, social, and economic impacts of aquaculture development. All these aspects are a part of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) Aquaculture Questionnaire.

8. The CCRF was endorsed in 1995, since which the fisheries and aquaculture sector has changed significantly, fuelled by a constantly growing demand and consumption of aquatic food, with aquaculture becoming the fastest growing food sector and an increasingly dominant source of aquatic foods.

9. In 2008, FAO began a participatory process to design a questionnaire for the assessment of the implementation of the CCRF. This main questionnaire has been used by Members since 2013 to report on the performance of its implementation.

10. In 2015, the web-based survey platform designed for the main CCRF questionnaire was extended to include the CCRF Aquaculture Questionnaire. In addition, in 2017, the questionnaire for Members was modified to produce a questionnaire specific to Regional Fishery Bodies and Aquaculture Networks (RFB/ANs)⁵ with an aim to: (i) understand the perception and/or assessment of RFB/ANs on the compliance with the CCRF in aquaculture by the countries in their area of jurisdiction; and (ii) assess the effort of RFB/ANs to support the countries' compliance. This was the first time RFB/ANs were involved in the survey.

11. The questionnaire for Members contains 53 questions embedded in four parts⁶ while the questionnaire for RFB/ANs comprises of 38 questions contained in three parts⁷. Both questionnaires identify essential management instruments and measures, support mechanisms that facilitate the implementation of these measures and enhancing mechanisms that would improve the effectiveness of these measures. Further, the Members' questionnaire seeks to uncover the level/degree of capacity to support the identified measures.

12. The questionnaires and reporting systems used in 2017, 2019, and 2021 still apply. Considering the short time between the Eleventh (May 2022) and Twelfth (May 2023) Sessions of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ), and as discussed with the Sub-Committee Bureau, FAO did not launch the questionnaire.

13. At the Eleventh Session of COFI:AQ held virtually in Rome, Italy, from 24 to 27 May 2022, the Secretariat introduced documents COFI:AQ/XI/2022/3 (Progress reporting on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) provisions relevant to aquaculture and

⁵ Adjusted from Members' questionnaire.

⁶ Part 1: Essential management instruments and measures; Part 2: Support mechanisms that facilitate the implementation of the regulatory measures listed in Part 1; Part 3: Enhancing mechanisms that would improve the effectiveness of the measures and mechanisms listed in Parts 1 and 2; and Part 4: The level/degree of capacity to support the measures in parts 1 to 3.

⁷ Part 1: Essential management instruments and measures; Part 2: Support mechanisms that facilitate the implementation of the regulatory measures listed in Part 1; Part 3: Enhancing mechanisms that would improve the effectiveness of the measures and mechanisms listed in Parts 1 and 2.

culture-based fisheries) and COFI:AQ/XI/2022/SBD.1 (Analytical results of responses by FAO Members and Regional Fishery Bodies and Aquaculture Networks to the 2021 Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries implementation in aquaculture). The total rate of responses was 36 percent in 2015, 40 percent in 2017, 57 percent in 2019 and 37 percent in 2021.

14. The Sub-Committee provided several recommendations regarding the assessment of the implementation of the CCRF, specifically on the related questionnaire. The following section provides the progress made towards the implementation of the Sub-Committee's recommendations.

UPDATES ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AQUACULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE

15. Communication with Members on the questionnaire follows agreed and standard communication protocols for official correspondence between FAO and Members. However, some Members noted that the dispatched messages were not reaching the correct people.

16. FAO is currently exploring options for addressing this issue to improve Members' participation in the surveys. One option could be to inform FAO Representations at the country, subregional and regional levels in the process and invite them to liaise with the relevant ministries at country level. A second option could be for Members to nominate a National Focal Point within the relevant ministry to liaise regularly with the Secretariat regarding any issues with the CCRF Aquaculture Questionnaire. The Secretariat welcomes Members' guidance on these options.

17. Based on Members' feedback, the primary reason for a reduced level of participation appears to be an ineffective communication mechanism where, despite dispatches following standard protocol, individual offices tasked with completing the questionnaire are not always aware. Other reasons are yet to be explored.

18. The Sub-Committee emphasized the need to update the questionnaire by adding more emerging and strategic issues. The questionnaire is being revised to accommodate this recommendation including bringing the word "farmers" to the list of stakeholders as well as adding questions on issues such as Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), effluent management and small-scale aquaculture, among others.

19. The Sub-Committee may wish to suggest volunteer participation in the revision of the questionnaire and in the design of a new web-based CCRF Aquaculture Questionnaire launch through the Sub-Committee Bureau.