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REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

Tenth Meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Doha, State of Qatar, 6 - 8 December 2016

Socio-economics of RECOFI fisheries

Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the socio-economics work that has been undertaken by the socio-economic task group, as well as to provide a summary of the main outcomes on this topic at the eighth session of RECOFI and ninth meeting of the WGFM. Finally, this paper provides a proposal for the way forward, in the form of an updated Terms of Reference for the socio-economic Task Group.

The WGFM is invited to:

- Provide details of each member country's Task Group member and alternate
- Review and propose updates for the Task Group ToR
- Provide any comments on the utility of the socio-economic work to date and in the future of RECOFI work, in particular with regards to the integration into ongoing work of the regional data center

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. After an agreement to begin exploring the social and economic dimensions of fisheries in the RECOFI region at the sixth session of RECOFI, held in Rome from 10 to 12 May 2011, a workshop on the Social and Economic Aspects of Fisheries in the RECOFI region was held in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain from 22 to 24 April 2012. At this workshop, country profiles were presented, and the potential ways forward for social and economic work were discussed and explored, including different possible indicators which could be considered important and useful for the RECOFI region.

2. At this workshop, one of the notable outcomes was that a Task Group was established, (current Task Group members listed in Appendix 1), with a Terms of Reference (Appendix 2).

CONSIDERATION OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WORK IN RECOFI

Seventh session of RECOFI

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3. The Commission unanimously agreed that social and economic considerations are critical, noting that the success and effectiveness of management measures relies on how these factors are taken into account. The relevance of socioeconomic work to implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries/aquaculture (EAF/A) was stressed.

4. The Commission suggested developing guidelines for the social and economic aspects of fisheries for the RECOFI region, in terms of data collection and monitoring so that Member countries can adapt to their own contexts, while ensuring that tools are developed to facilitate comparability.

Seventh and eighth meetings of the WGFM

5. At the seventh meeting of the WGFM (Kuwait, 5–7 November 2013), the meeting reviewed the draft questionnaire developed by the Task Group. The Task Group member from Oman, Ms Ruqaiya Al-Bulushi, with the support of the Secretariat, developed the revised version of the national questionnaire. The meeting endorsed the revised version with the integration of the comments and proposed changes, to be circulated to Task Group members and filled out for each country. The WGFM recommended that some topics that would be omitted at this stage are relevant and important for socioeconomic work and should be taken up at a later stage. The WGFM requested the Secretariat to circulate the revised questionnaire to the Task Group members. The Task Group would then report the results of questionnaire survey to the eighth meeting of the WGFM.

6. At the eighth meeting of the WGFM (Cairo, Egypt 8–10 December 2014) the survey questionnaire results were presented. The completed surveys were received by seven Member countries, including Iraq, Iran IR, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar. The level of information from each country varied, and the information provided by Member countries was encouraging, in particular as a starting point for gathering information on markets about pricing, as well as consumption by species.

7. It was acknowledged that this survey questionnaire, while general, marked a good start to ascertaining the available information and to establish the foundations for the socioeconomic work of RECOFI, and in particular the information on price, trade and crew composition are useful.

8. It was recognized that further information should be identified to collect and analyse at the regional level to build on this questionnaire, and could focus on operational/running costs and employment issues. The meeting agreed that the Socio Economic Task Group should take this forward, including the design and circulation of the new survey to be completed and analysed. The meeting acknowledged the need to ensure that the Task Group members are updated, play a more proactive role and are less reliant on the Secretariat.

Eighth session of RECOFI

9. At the eighth session of RECOFI (Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May 2015), the Commission noted that all member countries had agreed to ensure that the Task Group members were updated in order to continue to work on this matter and expand the survey as appropriate and possible. Country delegates were requested to provide the updated Task Group members within two weeks of the conclusion of the eighth session. Regarding the survey questionnaire, the Commission recommended that, while some components of the survey would not need repeating, others should be subject to resurvey and updating. The Commission advised that fishers should be included in future surveys to gather information on their situation and attitudes, and that additional data on operating costs and profit should be collected.

10. Revised and updated survey questionnaire results are were presented, to incorporate responses from Bahrain which were submitted in April 2015, as well to correct errors which were noted by Iran (I.R.) during the eighth session of the Commission.

Ninth meeting of the WGFM

11. The WGFM discussed possible ways forward for the socio-economic work, emphasizing the need for further socio-economic data collection and analysis, but also noting that there could be more clarity on the overall scope of this work. The WGFM considered the revised terms of reference for the Task Group.

12. The WGFM agreed that continuation of this socio-economic work is appreciated as a key activity in the intersessional period, noting the important role of the Task Group. It was also noted that information could continue to be collected, expanding on what was already available from the survey results to ensure that as much of the socio-economic information available at the national level as possible was shared at the RECOFI level.

13. The discussion focused on the use of social and economic indicators in fisheries management. The meeting was reminded that sustainable social and economic components are essential to the ecosystem approach to fisheries management. This need had initially been addressed during the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Fishery Stock Indicators and Stock Status, held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran in July 2009. The meeting acknowledged that the Task Group could play a proactive role in linking ongoing data collection to management objectives.

14. The WGFM urged RECOFI member countries to update their Task Group members as soon as possible, through their National Focal Points.

WAY FORWARD

15. After an initial good start with the socio-economic work, the WGFM, in order to ensure continuity in its work on this matter, may wish to consider next steps for how this socio-economic profile can be built for the RECOFI region, using the limited resources available, but taking advantage of the existing Task Group. The current Terms of Reference for the Task Group, as well as the composition of the Task Group itself need to be updated in order to facilitate progress on this area of work. Finally, the WGFM could consider the merit to include socio-economic data collection with regards to the regional data information center that is being established

16. The WGFM is requested to do the following:

- Provide details of each member country's Task Group member and alternate
- Review and propose updates for the Task Group ToR
- Provide any comments on the utility of the socio-economic work to date and in the future of RECOFI work
- The merit to include socio-economic data collection with regards to the regional data information center that is being established

Appendix 1

Socioeconomic Task Group Members
(as of April 2016)

Country	Task Group Member	Alternate
Bahrain	Nasser Al-Saffar (Task Group Coordinator) Senior Specialist, Catch & Licensing Directorate of Fisheries Resources Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment & Wildlife P.O. Box 20071 Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain Tel.: +973 17815872 E-mail: nalsaffar@pmew.gov.bh	
Iran IR	Ghazanfar Azadi (Focal Point) Deputy Director General for Fisheries and Fisheries Affairs Iran Fisheries Organization Ministry of Jihad-e- Agriculture No 236, West Fatemi Avenue.P.O. Box 14155-6353 PC 1418636331, Tehran, Iran Tel.: +9821-66941373 Mob.:+989123054502 E-mail: Azadi2222@gmail.com	Behrooz Geranpayeh (Alternate F.P.) Expert of Fishing Economy Iran Fisheries Organization Ministry of Jihad -e- Agriculture No 236 West Fatemi Avenue.PO Box 141556353 PC 1418636331, Tehran, Iran Tel: +9821-66941373 Mob:+989123220625 E-mail: Geranpayeh@gmail.com
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UAE		
Saudi Arabia	Khalid Saleh Al-Shaye Deputy Director of Marine E-mail:- Kalshaye@gmail.com	

Appendix 2**Terms of Reference****Version defined in April 2012****Socioeconomic Task Group**

The need to formulate a plan of work focused on the comprehension and assessment of the social and economic aspects in the RECOFI region relating to and in support of the sustainable management of marine fisheries in the region was agreed at the Workshop on Social and Economic Aspects of Fisheries in the RECOFI region (Bahrain, 22–24 April 2012), and also agreed on the establishment of a Task Group to address the socio-economic dimension of fisheries in the region. The Task Group is established to support and facilitate the work of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) focused on the social and economic aspects of RECOFI fisheries.

The Task Group carries out advisory and liaison functions with respect to the WGFM's programme of work in the field of fishery socioeconomics. In addition, the Task Group, through its Coordinator maintains contact with the Commission's Secretariat on issues related to the socioeconomic work plan and related activities.

The meeting agreed on the following terms of reference for the Task Group:

- 1) Keep informed the relevant national authorities and counterparts on the RECOFI socio-economic work plan and related activities;
- 2) Identify and liaise with the existing social and economic expertise in each country;
- 3) Promote and coordinate the implementation of the fishery socio-economic activities in the member countries including basic information gathering, collation and compilation;
- 4) Contribute to the implementation of the RECOFI socio-economic work including the revision and pilot execution a survey questionnaire;
- 5) To ensure the effective flow of communications regarding the RECOFI activities to and from national scientific and institutional counterparts, and from relevant stakeholders; and
- 6) Assist the Task Group Coordinator to formulate a regional work plan for consideration by the WGFM at its sixth meeting (Qatar, October 2012).

Revised elements considered in 2015

- Formulation of a basic workplan to build up the socio-economic profile of RECOFI fisheries, to be discussed by the WGFM;
- Identification of initial indicators which would be useful for RECOFI fisheries;
- Exchange of information of current and future socio-economic data collection and work; and
- Regular virtual meetings and communication via e-mail or skype to ensure timely exchange of information on socio-economic matters.