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Main features, obligations and benefits under the *Agreement for the Establishment of the Regional Commission for Fisheries*

OVERVIEW

The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI or the Commission) is the Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) in the region covering the Gulf and the Sea of Oman (the "RECOFI Area"), one of about 50 Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) through which States cooperate for the development and adoption of conservation and management measures. RFMOs, such as RECOFI, have competence to adopt legally binding conservation and management measures.

The [Agreement for the Establishment of the Regional Commission for Fisheries](#) (the Agreement) was developed in response to international legal developments on environmental, ocean, and fisheries matters in the early-mid 1990s. The Agreement was approved by the FAO Council at its Hundred Seventeenth session in 1999 and entered into force on 26 February 2001. There are currently 8 Members of the Commission.

Since its establishment, two working groups have been created under RECOFI, respectively addressing (i) fisheries management and (ii) aquaculture.

OBJECTIVES

The Agreement's main objective is to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, and sustainable aquaculture development in the waters of the RECOFI Area.

MAIN ELEMENTS

The Agreement contains 18 Articles.

Once Members of the Commission, Contracting Parties participate and vote on matters related to the Commission's functions and responsibilities (Article III), which include:

- keeping under review the state of living marine resources, the state of the fisheries based thereon, as well as the economic and social aspects of the fishing industry;
- formulating and recommending measures for the conservation and rational management of living resources, as illustrated above, and for the implementation of these recommendations;
- encouraging, recommending, coordinating and undertaking training and extension activities in all aspects of fisheries, as well as research and development activities;
- assembling and disseminating information on exploitable living marine resources and fisheries based on these resources;
- promoting programmes for aquaculture and fisheries enhancement.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR PARTIES

On becoming a Party to the Agreement and implementing its provisions effectively, a State stands to gain numerous benefits, including:



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A. PARTICIPATING IN THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF MARINE LIVING RESOURCES IN THE RECOFI AREA

Contracting Parties participate in improving the conservation and management of living aquatic resources, dependent and associated species, ecosystems and biodiversity in the RECOFI Area by ensuring that national sectors using or interacting with those resources comply with applicable international and regional standards.

B. PROMOTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN THE RECOFI AREA

Contracting Parties can ensure that the fisheries and aquaculture sectors are developed and strengthened in a sustainable manner, in line with relevant international and regional instruments and guidance. With the sharing of information, and good practices in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development promoted by RECOFI, the Contracting Parties are able to ensure that the sectors strive and effectively contribute to food security and nutrition in the region, while ensuring genetic diversity is conserved and adverse impacts on the environment and local communities are minimized.

C. ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Contracting Parties demonstrate commitment to implementing recommendations that aim to improve conservation and management of fisheries and aquaculture in the RECOFI Area. Contracting Parties can attract the interest of market States that buy resources and products from fisheries and aquaculture legally and sustainably, owing to their commitment to combat overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Consequently, Contracting Parties and their associated industries activities can benefit from increased income generated in more favorable market States through fishing in the RECOFI Area. RECOFI further promotes dialogue with business entities, with attendant benefits in terms of additional income from fishing and aquaculture.

D. ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE FISHERIES AND MARITIME SECTORS

Parties enhance their reputation as law-abiding, transparent, reliable, and cooperative actors and may attract foreign investment in their fisheries, aquaculture, and maritime sectors.

E. IMPROVED GOVERNANCE OF THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTORS IN THE RECOFI AREA

Ensuring the implementation of recommendations on conservation and management adopted by the Commission can significantly enhance fisheries and aquaculture governance in the RECOFI Area, through improved coordination in monitoring, control, and surveillance of fishing vessels operations, with consequent boosts in transparency in decision-making in these areas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Agreement, model instruments for adherence to the Agreement and treaty processes in FAO, please contact: treaties@fao.org



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