
Preparation of this document

This publication is the proceedings of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) expert technical workshop on “Expanding mariculture farther offshore: technical, environmental, spatial and governance challenges”, held in Orbetello, Italy, from 22 to 25 March 2010 and organized by the Aquaculture Branch of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

The workshop was attended by 13 internationally renowned experts from eight countries (Canada, Chile, Denmark, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, the United States of America), representing the private sector, industry, academia, government, research organizations, and eight staff members from FAO.

The focus of this workshop was to discuss the growing need to transfer land-based and nearshore aquaculture production systems farther from the coast as a result of the expected increases in human population, competition and access to land and sea along the coastal belt.

This initiative attempts to collect information on the potential for global mariculture development (off the coast and offshore) by considering technical, biological, spatial, environmental, socio-economic, legal and policy issues and to identify major opportunities and challenges to act upon at all levels for the industry to expand sustainably. Furthermore, it intends to respond to the needs of the FAO Members to ensure access to adequate information on the potential for off-the-coast and offshore aquaculture, as well as, the requirements to fulfil this potential in terms of governance, research, information, investment, capacity building, relevant policies and required strategies at national, regional and global level.

These proceedings are written for national authorities (e.g. governments, ministries, research institutions and the private sector) that are interested in promoting and supporting the development for off the coast and offshore aquaculture, and it attempts to provide a comprehensive review on the main issues specific to this subsector. Furthermore, the recommendations to FAO can also be very useful for consideration by the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and its Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (SCA) in their deliberations on the increase in global aquaculture output to deliver nutritious food in a sustainable manner.

As an additional output derived from the workshop, the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 549 entitled “A global assessment of offshore mariculture potential from a spatial perspective” was prepared to provide estimates of quantitative spatial measures of the status and potential for offshore mariculture development. Applications of satellite data for enhanced operational aquaculture management are also described.

The workshop report has been edited by FAO. All the other reviews and case studies have been reproduced as submitted (on the accompanying CD-ROM).