

**FAO Expert Consultation on Identifying, Assessing and reporting on
Subsidies in the Fishing Industry**

PROSPECTUS

BACKGROUND

The FAO Fisheries Department assists FAO members to review the use and effects of subsidies in fisheries. The FAO Expert Consultation on Economic Incentives and Responsible Fisheries, held in Rome, from 28 November to 1 December 2000 reviewed part of this work. Twelve experts (two from Asia, two from Latin America, two from Africa, two from Europe, two from North America, one from Oceania and one expert from WTO) invited in their personal capacity, attended the Consultation. They addressed three main issues: (i) the definition of subsidies and how best to divide them into categories; (ii) the impact of subsidies on fisheries resources sustainability; and, (iii) the impact of subsidies on trade in fish and fish products.

The report of the Expert Consultation was considered by FAO Members during the 24th Session of the FAO Committee of Fisheries, 26 February-2 March 2001. The Committee agreed that future work by FAO on subsidies in fisheries should aim to determine the quantitative and qualitative effects of subsidies on trade in fish and fishery products, and on sustainability of fishery resources. Work on trade aspects should be of a technical nature and be closely coordinated with the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the competent body for trade discipline.

The Committee of Fisheries proposed that a second Expert Consultation on Subsidies in Fisheries be organized by FAO. It also suggested that the Expert Consultation be followed by a Government Technical Consultation on the issue.

The multi-national discussions on the use of subsidies in fisheries will continue. In preparing for such discussions, countries are likely to need to identify and assess the magnitude and effects of subsidies in their respective economies. They will also need to consider how to make inter-country comparisons of subsidies and their effects.

OBJECTIVE

The principal objective of the expert consultation is to help those concerned to identify, assess and report on fishery subsidies.

SCOPE

The Expert Consultation (i) will critically review a methodology for identifying, assessing and reporting on subsidies to the fisheries sector; and, (ii) will discuss comparisons of measurements of subsidies.

DOCUMENTATION

Two documents will be prepared specifically for the Expert Consultation:

- A draft *Guide for identifying, assessing and reporting on subsidies in the fisheries sector*; and,
- A document analysing the issues that arise when measurements of subsidies are compared.

OUTPUT

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Expert Consultation will be reported to the 25th Session of COFI to be held in early 2003.

PARTICIPANTS AND VENUE

Participants in the Expert Consultation will attend in their personal capacities. Invitations will be extended to individuals recognised as competent in relevant disciplines. The organiser will strive to ensure that all major geographical regions are represented and that the combined experience and knowledge of the individuals attending the Consultation will be balanced in terms of practical experience and theoretical know-how.

The Expert Consultation will be held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 3 to 6 of December 2002.

TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

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