



FIGIS/2002/6

FAO proposal for improving information on the status and trends of capture fisheries

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Management Summary	
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A Draft Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries Draft was agreed by a Technical Consultation which met in Rome during 25-28 March 2002. The Draft Strategy will be considered for adoption by the FAO Committee for Fisheries in 2003.

Status and trends information is key to sound policy-making and management and to responsible fisheries and it also commands a high level of public interest. The Draft Strategy has been elaborated within the framework of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and, like the Code, is voluntary with no new legal obligations, but it does propose to invigorate data collection and research, and the assembly and dissemination of information. Its objectives are to

- **provide a framework for improvement of knowledge of fishery status and trends for improved policy-making, management and sustainable use;**
- **allow States, Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and FAO better cooperate to assemble status and trends information in a more systematic way using modern technology and to disseminate through FIGIS; and**
- **to build capacity in developing countries to participate in the Strategy.**

Guiding principles for the Strategy are sustainability, provision of the best scientific evidence, participation and cooperation, objectivity, transparency, timeliness and flexibility.

The Draft Strategy specifies several required actions:

- **Capacity building in developing countries through technical assistance, technology transfer, training and scientific cooperation and the implementation of cost-effective and sustainable data collection, analysis, reporting, exchange to fulfil national needs as well as those of RFBs and FAO.**
- **For small-scale and multispecies fisheries which are often not well monitored and which are underestimated and underrepresented, to enhance capacities to extend coverage for data collection, validation and analysis. To develop and adopt standards and systems through RFBs and FAO. To develop innovative approaches and guidelines**
- **Expand the scope of information where necessary for management responsibilities, (e.g. climatic, ecosystem and socio-economic factors) and to develop indicators of sustainable development.**
- **Support compilation of global inventory of fisheries and fish stocks as a basis to improve completeness of status and trends information. Develop definitions, form, content, methods and implement them. FAO and RFBs should establish processes for scientific oversight of inventories and status and trends information**
- **Support the development of FIGIS to facilitate systematic synthesis of status and trends information from national to regional and global levels. Data exchange protocols should be established and quality assurance and transparency should be provided for in partnership agreements. To provide the best information available to FIGIS following quality assurance through review processes and participate in pilot projects, workshops, training to implement FIGIS processes.**
- **Participate in development of criteria and methods to ensure information quality and security and apply them. FAO should facilitate the development of guidelines for quality assurance, transparency, security of information.**

- **Seek and agree arrangements to facilitate provision and exchange of status and trends information, and define roles and entitlements of partners, including in relation to quality, transparency and confidentiality.**
- **Working groups which assess status and trends of fisheries are recognized as an important mechanism for enhancing quality and transparency of information and they provide important opportunities for capacity building. States should formalize arrangements for such a mechanism to analyse fisheries data for the evaluation of status and trends and should ensure participation from developing countries.**
- **States should monitor systems for data collection, analysis and reporting in order to ensure their sustainability in order to meet the needs of national policy-making and management and the requirements of RFBs and FAO.**

If adopted by COFI, the Strategy should provide solid framework for partnerships to facilitate systematic flow of status and trends information from national to regional and global levels including FIGIS. The Strategy also aims to renew national commitment to collect, analyse and share information and to motivate development partner agency support for capacity building in developing countries.