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REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

Seventh Meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Kuwait, State of Kuwait, 5-7 November 2013

Fishery socio-economics: design and implementation of a regional workplan

Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) on the progress of the socio-economic work in the RECOFI region and to suggest further areas on the design and implementation of a regional workplan, for consideration of the Member countries.

The WGFM is invited to:

- Take note of the Commission's recommendations of the socio-economic work in the RECOFI region.
- Discuss the undertaking of follow up actions as requested by the Commission and the sixth meeting of the WGFM.
- Consider progress and role of the Task Group and suggest further action.

BACKGROUND

1. The RECOFI 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, following the agreement at the sixth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries, held in Rome from 10 to 12 May 2011. The meeting was convened by the RECOFI Secretary. The meeting was attended by 18 delegates from four Member countries and two observers, as well as the RECOFI Secretariat.
2. The outcomes of this workshop were discussed at the sixth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management, held on Doha, State of Qatar, recognized that there is a need and purpose for this socio-economic work and agreed on the merit for including the consideration of the social and economic aspects related to management decisions based on considerations of the state of the fishery resources. The WGFM noted the need to integrate socio-economic information and data collection within fisheries data collection frameworks to better inform management approaches and decisions.

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF FISHERIES IN THE RECOFI REGION

3. A regional workplan was outlined at the RECOFI Workshop on the Social and Economic Aspects of Fisheries in the RECOFI region in Manama, Bahrain in April 2012, and is detailed in RECOFI:WGFM7/2013/Inf.7. The main points for the regional workplan included:
 - Identification of priority goals and issues for social and economic aspects of fisheries in the region, whereby social and economic issues were considered for fisheries in general, and then considered for relevance to the regional context;
 - A survey questionnaire was introduced and elements to be considered to ensure the success of the questionnaire were highlighted;
 - Social and economic indicators were identified to be used at the national and regional level;
 - The RECOFI recommendation on minimum data reporting and its role in collecting social and economic data was presented and discussed;
 - The establishment of a socio-economist network and formulation of a regional work plan was emphasized;
 - The workshop made the following recommendations:
 - The regional work plan on socio-economic work should be formulated to support technical capacity development to advance knowledge on the socio-economics in the region.
 - Such work plan must be applicable, practical and useful, including the recommended socio economic survey questionnaires in manner that can be easily understood by the target questionnaire respondents and with clear definitions of terminologies used.
 - Social and economic aspects must be integrated and incorporated into the RECOFI fisheries management framework to ensure a more holistic approach in line with the ecosystem approach.
 - The Task Group would be established to address the above mentioned issues.
4. A Task Group was established, with a Terms of Reference which included the following elements:
 - Keep informed the relevant national authorities and counterparts on the RECOFI socio-economic workplan and activities;
 - Identify and liaise with the existing social and economic expertise in each country;
 - Promote and coordinate the implementation of the fishery socio-economic activities in the member countries including basic information gathering, collation and compilation;

- Contribute to the implementation of the RECOFI socio-economic work including the revision and pilot execution a survey questionnaire;
- To ensure the effective flow of communications regarding the RECOFI activities to and from national scientific and institutional counterparts, and from relevant stakeholders.

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF RECOFI

5. 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 socio-economic work to implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries/aquaculture (EAF/A) was stressed.
6. The Commission noted with approval the establishment and ongoing work of the RECOFI Task Group for fisheries socio-economics, in particular that this is the first instance in RECOFI where the initiative to develop and implement a Task Group has come from Member countries themselves. Member countries were requested to complete and update the Task Group membership. Member countries requested to have training courses to analyse the research data on social and economic aspects. The Commission affirmed its support for the Task Group and encouraged its ongoing work in the upcoming intersessional period.
7. 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. The Commission also agreed that the inclusion of mariculture in future socio-economic work should be considered.
8. The dearth of technical capacity, knowledge and expertise in the area of fisheries and aquaculture socio-economics was acknowledged by the Commission and the urgent need to identify this expertise and build this capacity within the RECOFI region was called for.