

**FAO Expert Consultation**  
***Catalyzing the Transition away from Overcapacity in Marine Fisheries***  
**15 – 18 October 2002**

**Prospectus**

**Background**

1. Overcapacity is often cited as the primary cause of overfishing, economic waste, and the unsustainable development of living marine resources.
2. Numerous international and domestic fisheries studies indicate that overcapacity and excessive fish harvesting capacity are prevalent in many common property and open access fisheries, regardless of the scale of fishing or the type of fishery.
3. Overcapacity and excessive fish harvesting capacity can also occur in limited access fisheries, contributing to overfishing, economic waste and unsustainable development in these situations.
4. One of the great challenges to achieving sustainable fisheries involves the management of fishing capacity in such a way that avoids or, at least, mitigates the deleterious effects – such as overfishing and/or economic inefficiency - of overcapacity.
5. The *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)* urges States to work to prevent overfishing and excess fishing capacity and to implement management measures to ensure that fishing effort is commensurate with the productive capacity of the fishery resources and their sustainable utilization.
6. As part of efforts to support sustainable development and, in particular, under the *International Plan of Action (IPOA) for the Management of Fishing Capacity*, FAO has been called upon to gather information about and to provide guidance regarding the management of fishing capacity and the management of overcapacity.
7. The social and economic impacts of overcapacity on sustainable development are creating increasingly significant conflicts and costs on civil societies, hence the importance of supporting fisheries managers around the world in their efforts to move away from situations of overcapacity.
8. Solutions for correcting situations of overcapacity that are both (i) practical to implement and (ii) durable in their effect can result in substantial improvements in the food security and the standard of living for fishermen and their communities as well as in the conservation of fish stocks.
9. Building on previous work which has described basic policy and technical issues relating to the management of fishing capacity<sup>1</sup>, FAO is hosting this expert consultation on catalysing the transition away from overcapacity to support local, national and regional management efforts to cope with situations of overcapacity.

**Objective**

10. The purpose of the Expert Consultation will be to identify and outline innovative strategies and mechanisms for reducing overcapacity and subsequently avoiding the regeneration of overcapacity.

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<sup>1</sup> Previous FAO-related work includes that of the Technical Working Group on the Management of Fishing Capacity, La Jolla, USA, 15 - 18 April 1998; FAO Consultation, Rome, Italy, 26 - 30 October, 1998; a preparatory meeting, 22 - 24 July, 1998; and such publications as *Management of Fishing Capacity: A Review of Policy and Technical Issues*, FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 409.

## Scope

11. The Expert consultation will emphasize the process of catalyzing political will, partnerships, and policy reforms by:
  - 11.1. identifying the sorts of approaches that can be used to implement both incentive blocking and incentive adjusting strategies for managing situations of overcapacity;
  - 11.2. identifying innovative opportunities and strategies for overcoming impediments to reducing overcapacity – such as innovative opportunities for investing in disinvestment; and
  - 11.3. suggesting elements for ensuring the ongoing success of capacity management.
12. The Expert Consultation will cover issues of subsistence, employment, and the raising of revenues and foreign exchange in various types of industrial fisheries, taking into account the flow-on and downstream effects that adjustment programs can have on other sectors, including artisanal fisheries sectors.

## Documentation

13. A background paper will be prepared as a basic platform from which to work. It will be available to any interested reader on the Internet.
14. Previous FAO reports and other documents, including previous FAO working group and consultation reports, will be provided to the experts.

## Output

15. The principal output expected from the expert consultation will be guidance on how to catalyze the transition away from overcapitalized fisheries. (*Tentative title: Catalyzing the Transition from Overcapacity: Guidelines of the Rome Expert Consultation: Report of the expert consultation on catalyzing the transition from overcapacity, Rome, 2002*)
16. The principal output will be available prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) that is being held in Rome in 2003.

## Participants

17. Participants in the expert consultation (approximately 8) will attend in their personal capacities. The invitations will be extended to individuals recognized as competent in disciplines relevant to the scope and purpose.
18. The organizer will work to ensure that participants reflect an appropriate inter-disciplinary, regional, and experiential balance to reflect a variety of perspectives on the issues under consideration as well as the breadth of different approaches and practical experiences in addressing (over)capacity in fisheries.

## Venue & Date

19. The expert consultation will take place at the FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 15-18 October. Additional details regarding hotels and other relevant information will be sent to participants at an appropriate time.

## **Technical Support**

20. The Technical Secretary of the expert consultation is Ms. Rebecca Metzner, Fishery Officer Fishery Policy & Planning Division. She may be contacted in Rome:

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