

**EXPERT CONSULTATION ON INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE
MANAGEMENT OF DEEP-SEA FISHERIES IN THE HIGH SEAS**

PROSPECTUS

**BANGKOK, THAILAND
SEPTEMBER 11-14, 2007**

Context

In light of the expansion of deep-seas fisheries from coastal waters under national jurisdiction towards high seas areas, and their potential impact on fish stocks, biodiversity and habitat, the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas has become an issue of international concern.

The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) first discussed deep-sea fisheries at its 25th session in 2003 and supported the proposal for an international conference on the topic (DEEP SEA 2003, Wellington and Kingston, NZ). The management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas has also been a major source of concern at United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meetings over the past few years. The most recent UNGA Resolution (61/105) called on, “States to take action immediately, individually and through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements, and consistent with the precautionary approach and ecosystem approaches, to sustainably manage fish stocks and protect vulnerable marine ecosystem...” In addition, the resolution commended FAO on its work regarding deep-sea fisheries and invited the organization to further its work on the topic. The vulnerability of deep-sea ecosystems and present management challenges in the high seas has been discussed not only in the context of global fora, but also in the realm of many international, regional and national institutions and non-governmental organizations which have been working to bring the issue to international attention.

The International Guidelines Process

The 27th session of COFI in 2007 resulted in recommendations that FAO continue to address deep-sea fisheries issues and develop international guidelines on the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. Following the organization of a review of main issues and the organization of an Expert Consultation on Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas (Bangkok, November 21-23, 2007) the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department will proceed with the development of the guidelines in the following manner: (i) the Expert Consultation discussed in this prospectus will provide the initial forum for the technical review of a first draft of the guidelines, (ii) a Technical Consultation in early 2008 will discuss the guidelines on a policy level and finalize the document, and (iii) the guidelines will be submitted to COFI for discussion and endorsement.

The first draft of the International Guidelines to be revised by the Expert Consultation is being prepared by the FAO. A Workshop on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems and Destructive Fishing (26-29 June, 2007) will provide some insight on these key issues. An additional workshop on Knowledge and Data on Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas will take place in 5-7 November, 2007, which will discuss a global review of deepwater fisheries in the high seas and potentially provide additional input regarding reporting obligations.

The Objectives

This Expert Consultation will be entirely focused on reviewing the draft guidelines submitted to the participants.

The Guidelines will elaborate on issues such as:

- definitions;
- fisheries management considerations;
- environmental considerations for management;
- management frameworks;

- compliance and enforcement issues;
- management measures; and
- reporting requirements.

The Guidelines will also elaborate the role and responsibilities of major stakeholders in deep-sea fisheries in the high seas.

Inputs

The main input will be the draft of the International Guidelines on the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas which will be distributed at least two weeks prior to the consultation.

Relevant background documents include:

- The Report of the Workshop on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems and Destructive Fishing (June 2007) (which will be made available before the Expert Consultation)
- The Report and Documentation of the Expert Consultation on Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas (November 2006) (available upon request)
- FAO. Report on Deep Sea 2003, An International Conference on Governance and Management of Deep-sea Fisheries. Queenstown, New Zealand, 1-5 December 2003. FAO Fisheries Report, No. 772. Rome, FAO. 2005. 84p.
- Shotton, Ross (ed.). Deep sea 2003: Conference on the Governance and Management of Deep-sea Fisheries. Part 2: Conference poster papers and workshop papers. Dunedin, New Zealand, 27-29 November 2003. FAO Fisheries Proceedings. No. 3/2. Rome, FAO. 2005. 487p.
- Shotton, Ross (ed.). Deep sea 2003: Conference on the Governance and Management of Deep-sea Fisheries. Part 1: Conference reports. Queenstown, New Zealand, 1-5 December 2003. FAO Fisheries Proceedings. No. 3/1. Rome, FAO. 2005. 718p.

Participants

Participation is by invitation only, following FAO relevant procedures. A limited number of experts will be invited by FAO in their individual capacity from a range of disciplines (technical, legal, policy, etc.) and a range of countries and affiliations.

Language

Based on the concurrence of the participants, the Expert Consultation will be conducted in English. Experts must agree in advance of the meeting that they are prepared and able to work only in English.

Date and Venue

The Expert Consultation will take place from 11 to 14 September 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand.

For further information contact

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