

Workshop on International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, 7-10 February 2012, FAO Rome, Italy

Concept Note

Background

The 29th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held in February 2011 recommended that an international instrument on small-scale fisheries be developed. This decision was based on the increasing recognition of small-scale fisheries as a principal contributor to poverty alleviation and food security and the guidance provided by a number of global and regional conferences and consultative meetings exploring how to better bring together responsible fisheries and social development in coastal and inland fishing communities.

The instrument will take the form of international guidelines that will be voluntary, focus on the needs of developing countries and be relevant to small-scale fisheries both in marine and inland waters, covering fishing as well as related post-harvest and upstream activities. The Guidelines (the SSF Guidelines) will be in support of national, regional and international initiatives for poverty alleviation and equitable social and economic development, for improving governance of fisheries and promoting sustainable resource utilization. Their objective is to provide advice and recommendations, establish principles and criteria, and make information available to assist States and stakeholders to achieve secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries and related livelihoods.

The FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department acts as the Secretariat for the development of the SSF Guidelines and hence promotes consultative processes involving governments, regional organisations, civil society organisations, and small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities. A background document was prepared in July 2011¹ with a view to stimulate discussions by summarizing the outcomes of the earlier consultations and attempting to outline the possible main thematic areas that the SSF Guidelines should address.

Purpose and expected outputs

The overall *purpose* of this Workshop is to contribute to a first preliminary draft of the SSF Guidelines. It will also be forward looking and provide recommendations for possible considerations and actions needed to promote and support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Furthermore, the workshop should offer advice to the FAO Secretariat with regard to the road map and next steps in the SSF Guidelines development process and what additional actions may be required to ensure that a negotiated document can be presented to COFI in 2014 for approval.

Accordingly, the *expected outputs* of the workshop are:

- Recommendations with regard to the title, structure, scope and target audience of the Guidelines, including chapter headings (corresponding to key thematic areas) and specific requirements concerning language and style.

¹ See <http://www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/guidelines/en>.

- Proposals for contents, including draft text elements for key sections/thematic areas and recommendations with regard to how the definition or characterization of small-scale fisheries should be addressed and what the key guiding principles should be.
- Recommendations with regard to the next steps in the Guidelines development process (e.g. concerning the continued consultations, the report to be given to COFI 2012, the inter-governmental Technical Consultation scheduled for 2013, and the eventual submission of a negotiated SFF document to COFI in 2014).

Participation and scope

The Workshop will convene some 20 experts, including both men and woman, being selected for their knowledge on the subject matters at hand and for representing key disciplines, geographic regions and stakeholder groups. The workshop will review considerations and proposals made in the consultations that have taken place so far – including during the time leading up to the 2011 COFI recommendation – and support and assist in the development of the SSF Guidelines.

Workshop organisation and follow-up

The workshop will have duration of four days and take place in FAO, Rome, on 7-10 February 2012. It will be structured around plenary presentations and discussions, and working group sessions. The FAO Secretariat will provide the workshop with a *background document* in which the information, views and considerations currently available have been compiled. This document will be a starting point for the drafting work to take place in the workshop but it should be noted that it is not intended to restrict or constrain its work. Workshop participants will assist in drafting texts and take an active role in reporting from working group sessions.

The language of the workshop will be English. Based on the results of the workshop, the FAO Secretariat will prepare a first preliminary draft of the SSF Guidelines that will serve as an input into the subsequent consultation processes leading to a draft text that will be submitted to the negotiation phase of the Guidelines in 2013.

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