

**POST-EVALUATION STUDY OF THE INDIAN OCEAN FISHERY
COMMISSION: COMMITTEE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND
MANAGEMENT OF THE FISHERY RESOURCES OF THE GULFS**



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by
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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

In order to facilitate the preparation of this Post-Evaluation Study, a desk study was initiated. To support the study, a questionnaire was developed containing questions of relevance to the various issues involved in the study that were reflected in the terms of reference provided by FAO FIPL/RNE. The FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) faxed the questionnaire on 20 November 2001 to the appropriate fisheries officials in the Member States (excluding Iraq) of the Gulfs Committee. The questionnaire was intended to provide a basis for discussions. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed and the resulting analysis was included, where appropriate, in the various sections of the study. Distinctive points made during the discussions with each of the states visited are included in Section VII of the Study.

As a follow-up to the questionnaire and the results of the analysis of the responses, the Consultant made a field visit during the period from 4 to 20 January 2002. He visited seven of the eight Member States as a means of completing and validating information obtained in the responses to the questionnaire and the desk study. The Consultant visited Oman, Iran, U.A.E., Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia in that order. During all the visits, discussions with fisheries officials and staff were frank and open, and provided very fruitful material for this Post-Evaluation Study.

Feidi.I.H.

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ABSTRACT

The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was established in 2001 as an FAO Regional Fishery Body under Article XIV of its Constitution. It replaced the now defunct Gulfs Committee, which ceased to exist in 1999 when its parent Commission, the Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (IOFC), was abolished. At its First Session held in Muscat, Oman in October 2001, RECOFI requested that a Post-Evaluation Study on the Gulfs Committee be carried out to provide useful lessons from its experiences and operations. The FAO Secretariat recruited a Consultant to carry out the task.

The Gulfs Committee had eight Member States. These were: Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. It was established in 1972 as a subsidiary to the IOFC in order to follow up on the development of the fisheries sectors of its eight Member States. Its main task was the implementation of the regional Gulfs Project, which was being executed by FAO during the period 1975-1979. A technical sub-committee was appointed by the Committee to supervise the activities of the Project and report on its progress.

Upon the termination of the Gulfs Project, the Committee continued to work on the development of the fisheries sector. However, it experienced a slowdown in its activities during the 1980s. It met only twice during a period characterized by the tense atmosphere of two wars (1980-1988 and 1990/1991). But a new spirit of cooperation and collaboration began with the Seventh Session, held in 1992, which marked the beginning of a surge of activity, supported by the determination of the members whose attitude was very positive. Technical Working Groups were established to tackle specific issues. Six Groups were eventually formed, holding ten meetings in all. Their initial results provided an opportunity to lay down the basis for scientific management of fishery resources and opened avenues for local scientists, experts, and research workers to report on and develop their scientific work.

In all, the Gulfs Committee held nine regular Sessions. Three Ad Hoc Sessions were held to consider the Committee's future and the formation of its successor. During its lifetime of 28 years, it established a firm basis in fisheries development and management, activities that had been almost non-existent. It helped develop local expertise and initiated the development of fisheries through the Gulfs Project, and later through the activities of the technical Working Groups. It laid the foundation for rational management of the area's fisheries resources on a national and regional basis. There were several shortcomings, which mainly affected the regional level. The Committee failed to agree on a follow-up to the Gulfs Project, thus depriving the region of the capacity to monitor and control fisheries resources at a regional level. The regional database was also not established as agreed. There were several constraints that the Member States could not jointly overcome to support and enhance the work of the Committee.

Member States, in collaboration with the FAO Secretariat to the Committee, tried hard to fulfil the Committee's objectives. The Gulfs Committee succeeded in fulfilling some of its objectives, particularly by enabling fisheries conservation and development to be given a higher level of priority.

Several recommendations are suggested. The main recommendations are that the region-wide resources surveys should be undertaken as soon as possible to obtain needed knowledge on the state of the resources; that the Working Groups be continued and that they should be expanded and formalized; that there be greater awareness of international developments in the fisheries; and that each member state should appoint a representative and an alternate to attend all the meetings, and act as a focal point for follow-up on the activities of RECOFI. FAO should continue to provide support and assistance until the Commission matures enough to achieve full independence. Last but not least, Governments are called upon to upgrade their national plans for fisheries conservation and development.

IOFC:GULFS COMMITTEE

ACRONYMS

AFESD	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
AFFP	Arab Federation of Fish Producers
AOAD	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
COFI	FAO Committee on Fisheries
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GCC	Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFMC	General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean
Gulfs committee	Committee for the Development and Management of the Fishery Resources of the Gulfs
Gulfs Project	Fishery Suwey and Development Project
ICLARM	International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Mangement
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFRO	Iranian Fisheries Research Organization
INFOSAMAK	Center for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Arab Region
IOFC	Indian Ocean Fishery Commission
IOP	Indian Ocean Fishery Survey and Development Program
IOTC	Indian Tuna Ocean Commission
KISR	Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research

PERSGA	Regional Organization for the Conservation of the environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
RECOFI	Regional Commission For Fisheries
RNE	FAO Regional Office for the Near East
ROPME	Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment
The Code	The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
UNCED	United Nations Conference for Environment and Development
UNCLOS	United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFS	World Food Summit
WIOTO	Western Indian Ocean Tuna Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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