

FishCode: FAO's Programme of Global Partnerships for Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

J. Eric Reynolds
FishCode Programme Coordinator
E-mail: Eric.Reynolds@fao.org



PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was unanimously adopted by FAO member countries on 31 October 1995, against a background of profound concern within the international fisheries community for serious and growing threats affecting aquatic ecosystem diversity and productivity, resource sustainability, occupational welfare and food security.

Together with [Technical Guidelines](#)¹ for implementation and the [international fisheries instruments](#)² developed and adopted within its framework, the Code contains a broad set of voluntary principles and methods for developing and managing fisheries and aquaculture worldwide. The Code and its related instruments have been widely recognized by governments and civil society organizations as the global standard for setting out the aims of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture over coming decades and as a basis for reviewing and revising national fisheries legislation. They also define the normative basis for the work of the FAO Fisheries Department (FI).

In their Resolution adopting the Code, FAO member countries requested the Organization to respond to the special requirements of developing countries through an Interregional Assistance Programme for its implementation. [FishCode](#) was thus established by FI as a special programme of global partnerships to promote responsible fisheries. It now serves as a principal means through which the Department seeks to combine its regular budget with Trust Fund resources in support of activities to facilitate Code implementation. Donor partner contributions to the multilateral FishCode Trust, and to individual project trust

funds under the FishCode umbrella, support an array of component activities, all of which address issues and problem areas related to the transition to responsible fisheries and aquaculture at global, regional, national and local levels.

FISHCODE AND RESPONSIBLE AQUACULTURE

FishCode and Responsible Aquaculture Programme activities include, among others, technical assistance, training and human capacity development, workshops, and field research, surveys and studies. As reported at the 3rd Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (New Delhi, India, 4 – 8 September 2006), recent initiatives relating to responsible aquaculture that have been supported in whole or in part through FishCode include the following.

Lake Tanganyika Basin. A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the responsible use of alien species in the Lake Tanganyika Basin was presented to the thirteenth session of CIFA (Entebbe, Uganda, October 2004). A seminar on "Elements of Technical Guidelines for the Control and Responsible Use of Alien Species in Fisheries and Aquaculture: Key issues and Opportunities for Africa" was held in conjunction with this CIFA session.

Coastal Communities Development Project (Brazil). The UTF/BRA/066/BRA Project, covering three states in northeastern Brazil, became operational in October 2005. Basic aims are to: (i) expand the culture of *Gracilaria* seaweed; (ii) diversify mariculture production by the introduction of simple farming of other organisms; (iii) develop pilot projects on co-

management of marine resources; and (iv) establish a permanent inter-institutional framework, through mariculture development, to decrease poverty rates in coastal communities.

Project identification and formulation. Technical assistance has been provided in support of formulation of new projects in sustainable aquaculture in the context of post-conflict recovery for both Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. Formulation and resource mobilisation work continues on project proposals for GIS applications to inland fisheries and aquaculture, and for improving collection and processing of data and information on the status and trends of aquaculture.

NEPAD Technical Symposium and Fish for All Summit for Africa. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Technical Symposium and Fish for All Summit for Africa was held in Abuja, Nigeria from 22-25 August 2005. The events aimed to: (i) establish a shared understanding among key stakeholders of the current status and likely future trends of African fisheries and aquaculture; (ii) identify priorities for the development of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa within the context of the NEPAD programme; and (iii) agree future directions for research and capacity building in support of these development priorities.

Responsible aquaculture development in Viet Nam. The Report of the National Workshop on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its practical application to coastal aquaculture development in Viet Nam (Hue, Viet Nam 3-4 October 2003), organized with Programme support, was published as FAO FishCode Review No.12 in late 2004.

Preparedness and response to aquatic animal health emergencies in Asia. The Regional Workshop on Preparedness and Response to Aquatic Animal Health Emergencies, held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 21-23 September 2004, was published as FAO Fisheries Proceedings No. 4. The Workshop also resulted in FAO Fisheries Technical Paper No. 486, preparedness and response to aquatic animal health emergencies in Asia: guidelines.

Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries, No. 5: Aquaculture Development. Supplement on Health management and safe trans-boundary movement of live aquatics (in preparation).

Ad hoc Expert Consultation on international mechanisms for the control and responsible

use of alien species in aquatic ecosystems (27-30 August 2003, Zishuangbanna, People's Republic of China). The consultation report was published by FAO in 2005.

Activities associated with the 31st Annual Conference of the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centres (IAMSLIC): "Information for Responsible Fisheries" (FAO HQ, Rome, 10-14 October 2005) include collaborative work with the FAO Fisheries Library, the Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific (NACA) and the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB). Guidelines are being developed for the dissemination, accessibility and preservation of digital fisheries and aquaculture publications from developing countries, based on the experience of NACA and NACA partners.

Establishing an interregional mariculture partnership. Ongoing activity aims at the development of a forum for dialogue, discussion, decision and to conduct activities towards reducing the environmental risks, and increase social and economic benefits and equity of, mariculture development.

Strengthening interregional cooperation for responsible aquaculture development: Asia-Africa dialogue. Ongoing activity focuses on the development of partnership arrangements to: (i) promote South-South cooperation, particularly between Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia; and (ii) strengthen and foster networks linking regional stakeholder agencies and institutions for effective development and exchange of information and experiences related to aquatic resource management and sustainable livelihoods approaches, in particular aquaculture and inland-fisheries.

Further information on FishCode component projects and activities is available at: www.fao.org/fi/fishcode.htm

¹The FAO Fisheries Department has thus far published ten Technical Guidelines and four Technical Guideline Supplements for implementation of the Code. See <http://www.fao.org/fi/default.asp>.

²These include the four International Plans of Action (IPOAs) on (i) reducing incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries, (ii) the conservation and management of sharks, (iii) the management of fishing capacity, and (iv) the prevention, deterrence and elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, as well as the Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries (Strategy STF).