

# RECOFI-Working Group on Aquaculture



The rapid expansion of the aquaculture sector in the Persian Gulf Region has encouraged the Regional Fisheries Commission (RECOFI) during its Second Session (Muscat, Oman, 18-21 May 2003) to establish a Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA).

The WGA is composed of a network of aquaculture experts officially nominated by RECOFI Member countries (Bahrain, Islamic Republic of Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq). The WGA structure allows flexibility required to carry out its mandate and work plan, which are submitted and approved by the Commission during its biannual session. The Commission approved the WGA structure and Terms of Reference (TOR, see below), whose focus is on marine and brackishwater aquaculture. WGA is to convene on an annual basis prior to the regular Commission session. This human network of aquaculture experts is coordinated by the WGA Chairperson (acting for a period of two years) along with the support of RECOFI Secretariat. The TOR of the RECOFI WGA are to:

- ▶ advise the RECOFI on technical and policy matters related to aquaculture
- ▶ identify and discuss major issues and trends in regional aquaculture development
- ▶ identify and establish national focal points
- ▶ encourage technical cooperation and coordination among the member countries
- ▶ monitor development and trends of aquaculture practices in the region
- ▶ review existing legislations in member countries and encourage regional coordination with a view to promote harmonization, as appropriate
- ▶ form *ad hoc* aquaculture working groups, as and when required
- ▶ carry out other duties related to aquaculture promotion and development that may be referred to it by RECOFI
- ▶ publish special reports on aspects of aquaculture development
- ▶ conduct surveys linked to the development of aquaculture and to the generation of information and
- ▶ organize training courses, seminars, workshops and technical consultations as demanded.

In order to promote sustainable aquaculture development in the region and to facilitate information sharing on aquaculture among the Persian Gulf countries, the WGA has proposed and the Commission has endorsed the establishment of a Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS). RAIS, a web-based information system based in Kuwait, will serve as a regional mechanism for the regular collection, up-dating and dissemination of aquaculture information. RAIS has been designed applying the most up-to-date information technology and database management in accordance to international IT standards and will be officially launched by the end of 2007.

Further information can be obtained from Valerio Crespi (FAO-Lead Technical Officer of RAIS Project) at [Valerio.Crespi@fao.org](mailto:Valerio.Crespi@fao.org) and /or Alessandro Lovatelli (FAO-RECOFI-WGA Technical Secretary) at [Alessandro.Lovatelli@fao.org](mailto:Alessandro.Lovatelli@fao.org).