

# Fourth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture: A proposed work plan for the next biennium

Alessandro Lovatelli<sup>1</sup> and Dawood Suleiman Al-Yahyai<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Aquaculture Management and Conservation Service  
FAO Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Rome, Italy  
Alessandro.Lovatelli@fao.org

<sup>2</sup>RECOFI-WGA Chairperson  
Fishermen Training Institute  
Ministry of Manpower, Al-Kabura, Oman  
daw@hotmail.com

The fourth meeting of the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) held in Muscat, Oman, in January 2009, was attended by seven countries of the Commission<sup>1</sup>. The main objective of the meeting was to draft the new WGA work plan for submission at the Fifth session of the Commission (May 2009, Dubai, UAE). The proposed work plan activities listed below are based on recommendations and needs resulting from the implementation of activities during the last biennium, and emerging issues of importance for the region.

## Risk analysis in aquaculture.

The WGA identified during the Regional technical workshop on aquatic animal health (6–10 April 2008, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia) a number of capacity building themes. The application of risk analysis to aquaculture was proposed as a priority activity. The WGA concurred that an integrated approach to risk analysis and application of risk management measures would assist the sector in reducing risks to successful operations from both internal and external hazards and could similarly help to protect the environment, society

and other resource users from adverse and often unpredictable impacts. The activity proposed is the organization of a training workshop on the introduction of risk analysis as applied to the aquaculture sector.

## Environmental monitoring in cage aquaculture.

At the WGA Regional technical workshop on sustainable marine cage aquaculture development (25–26 January 2009, Muscat, Oman) several follow-up actions had been recommended. One priority activity concerned the development of a specific fish cage culture monitoring programme for the region. It was recommended that the adaptation of an existing

monitoring programme be carried out in collaboration with a recognized research institution that holds expertise in cage farming environmental impact and monitoring.

**Hazardous algal blooms.** In view of a recent major red tide event in the region that seriously affected fish cage aquaculture, the WGA recommended the organization of a workshop on the impacts of hazardous algae on aquaculture with a focus on how the fish cage culture sector could handle the problem by developing suitable counter measures in case of an outbreak.



A. LOVATELLI, FAO

*Indoor broodstock and research tanks used at the KISR research facility in Kuwait*

**National strategy on aquatic animal health.** At the Regional technical workshop on aquatic animal health (6–10 April 2008, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia), it was also agreed that national and international aquatic animal health programmes are becoming essential to ensure the sustainable development of aquaculture. Such national programmes need to be harmonized at both regional and international levels and particularly with programmes of neighboring and major trading partners in order to achieve maximum effectiveness particularly for the safe transboundary movement of aquatic animals. A planning workshop is proposed to elaborate on the essential elements of a national strategy and the steps required in its development and implementation.

**Spatial tools and aquaculture zoning.** The WGA concurred that recommending and finding sites for fish cage farming or other aquatic practices in the region has been and will be a challenge for the authorities and the industry. The WGA acknowledge that coastal zoning through the use of appropriate spatial tools would allow the identification and

possible allocation of specific geographical areas to aquaculture practices. It is proposed to review the regional competence in the use of spatial planning tools and organize an inception workshop that would synthesize the knowledge acquired in the region and to recommend a road map on how to move forward in aquaculture zoning.

**Aquaculture recirculation technologies.** In view of the geographical conditions in the region and limitations of specific resources, the WGA felt that there is a need to introduce alternative fish farming technologies in the region such as recirculation. The WGA recommended the organization of a technical workshop on recirculation systems by inviting experts from the private sector including from those commercial companies that provide such technology.

<sup>1</sup>FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Aquaculture. Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 27–28 January 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 895. Rome, FAO. 2009. 44p.



*View of the Fish Farming Centre in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Currently many culture structures are under renovation*



*Current Chairman of the RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture, Mr Dawood Suleiman Al-Yahyai*



**GFCM/CAQ Meeting on National Legislation on Siting, Monitoring Programmes and EIA Regulatory Framework for Finfish Marine Aquaculture (ShocMed)**

7-8 July 2009, Vigo, Spain

Information: [Fabio.Massa@fao.org](mailto:Fabio.Massa@fao.org)/[rchapela@cetmar.org](mailto:rchapela@cetmar.org)

**GFCM/CAQ Multistakeholder Workshop on Siting and Carrying Capacity**

21-22 October 2009 (Venue to be decided)

Information: [Fabio.Massa@fao.org](mailto:Fabio.Massa@fao.org)/[karakassis@biology.uoc.gr](mailto:karakassis@biology.uoc.gr)