


Special Achievement in GIS Award

The ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) International User Conference, held in San Diego, California on 15 July 2009, ESRI - the world leader in GIS - awarded the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department with a 'Special Achievement in GIS' in recognition of its vision, leadership and innovation in GIS technology applied to fisheries and aquaculture. The award consists of a plaque together with a certificate.

The Department was selected from among 300 000 organizations worldwide and this constituted a significant recognition of its extraordinary contribution to global society. FI's GISFish Web site was singled out as one of the 150 key sites selected from among more than 100 000 ESRI user sites worldwide, constituting yet another significant distinction.

This is the first time that the award is given to FI or even FAO, so it is an important acknowledgement of the work done so far. Team members that contributed to this award are Messrs. J. Aguilar-Manjarrez, James McDaid Kapetsky, Fabio Carocci, Jeff Jenness, Geoff Meaden, Carlo Travaglia, Gertjan DeGraaf, Felix Marttin, Marc Taconet, Francesco Cardia, Valerio Crespi and the KCTU programmers; Marcella Pesce, Ennio Lepri, Cosimo Togna, Yi Shuai and Sabina Ramazzotto.

Excerpts from the press release award documentation

Using GIS...

GIS and remote sensing provide the technology for mapping the distribution of aquatic resources, their environment, fishery management units, production systems, etc. which can support decision-making. FAO plays a unique role in providing such information. The Department's strategic approach for the use of GIS and Remote sensing is to set out the issues in Fisheries and Aquaculture and demonstrate the benefits of using GIS, remote sensing and mapping to resolve them. In overview, the GIS outputs at FIM from 1985 to date can be classified under four main categories: training, projects, field projects and missions, and oral presentations and publications.

Improving service to customers...

GIS, remote sensing and mapping are tools that support informed decisions concerning sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture. GIS is currently being used to support strategic plans for aquaculture and/or inland fisheries development. Spatial issues addressed most frequently include suitability of site and zoning, habitat quality and quantity linked to plant and animal abundance and distribution.

Providing benefits to local communities...

FAO field projects, missions and training courses have provided an opportunity for FIM to interact directly with experts and students from different countries around the world. Examples include use GIS to assist in the development of masters plans for aquaculture and/or inland fisheries development in the Republic of Cameroon and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

History at the Department...

The work was initiated and led by Dr James McDaid Kapetsky (FAO Senior Fishery Resources Officer retired) from 1985 to 1999. Dr Carlo Travaglia (FAO Remote sensing Officer retired) supported Dr Kapetsky's work and also played a key role in the promotion and development of GIS/RS at FIM during this time period. From 2001 to date Dr José Aguilar-Manjarrez has continued the same line of work as in the past with the continued support of Dr. Kapetsky as an external consultant.

Future plans...

Expanded GISFish will include marine fisheries in 2009. Two publications on the role of GIS, Remote Sensing and Mapping to support the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture respectively; one FAO Technical manual on GIS and Remote Sensing in Fisheries and Aquaculture; and one self-training manual on GIS for Fisheries and Aquaculture. Maps to inventory aquaculture. FAO field missions include: GIS to support an Aquaculture Information Management and Traceability System in Thailand; use of GIS as part of an Improved Aquaculture Information Systems in Africa. Efforts on the Ecosystem Approach and climate change at FAO are likely to shape the direction of future work on GIS at FI.

Photos from left to right: José Aguilar-Manjarrez, Fabio Carocci, Marc Taconet, Jim Kapetsky