



June 2011

## CONCEPT NOTE

### GOOD PRACTICES IN THE GOVERNANCE OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

*Sharing experiences and lessons learned in responsible fisheries for social and economic development*

*A consultation and capacity development process to inform national policies and practices and contribute to the development of international voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small scale-fisheries*

#### Rationale

Small-scale fisheries have been accorded a standalone agenda item in the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) since its 25<sup>th</sup> Session in 2003. In collaboration with several partners, efforts have been invested in improving the understanding of the current situation, challenges and opportunities of small-scale fishing communities in inland and marine waters and in raising the profile of the sector. In 2008, a global conference on *Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development* was held in Bangkok, Thailand<sup>1</sup>. The Conference re-enforced the claim that small-scale fisheries have yet to fully realize their potential to significantly contribute to sustainable development and the attaining of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Following a recommendation of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session in 2009, the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department embarked on a consultative process<sup>2</sup>, including regional workshops held in Bangkok, Maputo and San José in October 2010, to examine the need and various options for an international instrument on small-scale fisheries and a global assistance programme for the sector. This consultative process also aimed at identifying good practices in particular with regard to governance, resource management through the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries, and disaster risk management and climate change adaptation that could serve as inputs into the development of an instrument.

The outcomes of this process expressed strong support for the creation of an international instrument as well as the delivery of an assistance programme. At the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of COFI, the Committee agreed to these suggestions and recommended that the international instrument should take the form of international guidelines and complement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. These guidelines are in support of national, regional and international initiatives for poverty alleviation and equitable social and economic development, for improving governance of fisheries and promoting sustainable resource utilisation. They are complementary to other international instruments with similar purposes, in particular those related to human rights, sustainable development and responsible fisheries. Accordingly, the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department – in close collaboration with its partners and sector stakeholders – now starts the process of preparing these Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (“Guidelines”).

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Global Conference on Small-scale Fisheries – Securing Sustainable Small-scale fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development. Bangkok, Thailand, 13-17 October 2008. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No 911. FAO. 2009. 190p.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Inception Workshop of the FAO Extrabudgetary Programme on Fisheries and Aquaculture for Poverty Alleviation and Food Security. Rome, 27–30 October 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 930. Rome, FAO. 2010. 68p. and Regional consultative workshops on *Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development* in Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America-Caribbean (October 2010). The workshops were part of a programme development phase funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and implemented under the FAO FishCode Programme. The regional consultative workshops were co-funded by the Government of Norway.

## **The importance of process: consultation and involvement of stakeholders**

Building on the consultative process mentioned above, the scope and the elements of the Guidelines now need to be elaborated further with the support of national and regional stakeholder. The Guidelines should be a document that is agreed by governments and other stakeholders, and that small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities across the world feel ownership of and can relate to. This requires extensive consultations with all parties concerned, sound technical advice and good negotiation skills – to allow for effective compromises when required. Engaging closely with stakeholders early on and involving them in the process of developing the Guidelines is prerequisite for arriving at a final product that is accepted, respected and applied. A similar approach is used for the development process of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests which will also be reflected in the voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries.

The Guidelines will only become useful and have an impact if they are implemented. By working closely with stakeholders from the outset, the development of the Guidelines and their implementation will overlap. The discussions taking place during the preparation of the Guidelines will influence strategies, plans and actions and strong stakeholder buy-in will ensure that the instrument becomes an integral part of ongoing governance and development processes.

Accordingly, it is suggested that a wide range of stakeholders are asked to provide inputs into the development of the Guidelines. These consultations can take place in different ways and at different levels. In order to facilitate these consultations a discussion document is in preparation that draws on the outcomes from the recent consultative process as well as other work and discussions by and among FAO and its partners.

In view of the special significance of small-scale fisheries for food security and sustainable livelihoods, it is proposed to promote national stakeholder consultation processes within the context of the development of the Guidelines. The objective is to identify national priorities for strengthening the governance of small-scale fisheries to feed into the global Guideline development process as well as contribute to raising the profile of these fisheries in the national food security and poverty alleviation strategies and policies.

### **Activities and expected outputs**

It is suggested to organize several sub-national and local-level one day workshops to identify priorities which will then be consolidated in a national two day workshop. FAO has prepared a discussion document “Towards Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries” to facilitate these consultations. The process of national needs assessment and prioritization will be supported by capacity development through awareness building and social capital strengthening (e.g. through leadership training; fisheries community organization) activities prior and after the workshops. This would contribute to national efforts to enhance capacities of small-scale fishers, fish farmers and fish workers as well as of national fisheries institutions to reduce vulnerabilities and improve livelihoods for sustainable fisheries.

The expected outputs from the consultation, awareness raising and capacity development processes are an agreed national policy in support of sustainable small-scale fisheries and consensus on the steps needed to empower small-scale fishing communities to participate in policy making and responsible governance at the local and national levels. Furthermore, the reported results of the national consultation process are expected to feed into the Guideline development process coordinated by FAO.