



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations**



**Central Asian and Caucasus  
Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture  
Commission**

## **TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **SEVENTH MEETING**

**Baku, Azerbaijan, 13-15 May 2023**

**Main decisions and recommendations of CACFish and respective FAO  
fisheries governing bodies**

#### **Executive Summary:**

This document provides a summary of the topics discussed, recommendations made, and decisions taken at the following regional and international events:

- a) 36<sup>th</sup> Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI-36), held in hybrid format, 8-12 July 2024.
- b) 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), held in Pula, Croatia, 9-11 October 2024, and
- c) 8<sup>th</sup> Session of CACFish (CACFish-8), held in Baku, Azerbaijan, 19-20 December 2023.

This document is accompanied by the following documents:

- a) Report of the Thirty-sixth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 8–12 July 2024 (CACFish/TAC7/2025/Inf.3)
- b) Report of the Thirty-second Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission, Pula, Croatia, 9–11 October 2024. (CACFish/TAC7/2025/Inf.4)
- c) Report of the Eighth Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission, Baku, Azerbaijan, 19–20 December 2023. (CACFish/TAC7/2025/Inf.5)

#### **Suggested action by the Committee:**

- Note the discussions, recommendations and decisions of the respective FAO fisheries governing bodies and CACFish, and
- Provide further guidance, as appropriate, regarding the implementation of these recommendations and decisions.

## INTRODUCTION

1. This document contains highlights of the topics discussed and agreed upon at the following events:

- a) 36<sup>th</sup> Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI-36), held in hybrid format, 8-12 July 2024.
- b) 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) - Pula, Croatia, 9–11 October 2024, and
- c) 8<sup>th</sup> Session of CACFish (CACFish-8), held in Baku, Azerbaijan, 19-20 December 2023.

### **Main decisions and recommendations from 36<sup>th</sup> Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI-36)**

2. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was established in 1965. It is a Governing Body of FAO currently serving as the only global inter-governmental forum for fisheries and aquaculture issues. The two main functions of COFI are to review the work programmes of FAO in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture and their implementation, and to conduct periodic general reviews of fishery and aquaculture problems of an international character, and appraise such problems and their possible solutions with a view to the development of concerted remedial action by nations, FAO, intergovernmental bodies and civil society. The Committee also reviews specific matters relating to fisheries and aquaculture referred to it by the Council or the Director-General, or placed by the Committee on its agenda at the request of Members, or the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

3. The primary technical agenda items of COFI-36 were as follows:

- State of world fisheries and aquaculture and progress with the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (Code);
- Decisions and recommendations of the sub-committees of COFI;
- Contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Fisheries and ocean governance;
- Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries;
- Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing;
- Integrated water resource management in fisheries and aquaculture;
- The role of fisheries and aquaculture in food security and nutrition;
- Impact of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture, and aquatic foods as a climate solution;
- The implications for fisheries and aquaculture for global biodiversity frameworks and agreements;
- Marine plastic pollution.

4. The Committee:

- Noted that global fisheries and aquaculture production has hit a new record high, with aquaculture production of aquatic animals surpassing capture fisheries for the first time;
- Underlined the importance of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in meeting current and future food security and sustainable growth needs, while achieving sustainable and resilient agrifood systems, and welcomed global initiatives to promote sustainable aquatic food production from marine and inland waters, and addressing food loss and waste while

expressing concern for the current status of marine fish stocks at a global level;

- Noted that further improvements in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development are needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Endorsed the reports and recommendations from its three Sub-Committees, namely the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, the Sub-Committee on Trade, and the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management:
  - Adopted the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA);
  - Encouraged FAO to raise awareness of the GSA, promote good practices and seek funding to provide technical assistance and support in their implementation;
  - Requested FAO to prioritize attention to small-scale aquaculture through capacity building, means of commercialization and biosafety practices;
  - Recognized the need to build diversified sustainable agrifood systems and food sources through multiple approaches while noting the opportunities associated with sustainable seaweed aquaculture, and requested FAO to support sustainable seaweed aquaculture with technical assistance and capacity building;
  - Encouraged Members to accept the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, to bring it into force and complete further negotiations as soon as possible on outstanding issues in order to conclude a comprehensive negotiated agreement, and called for increasing technical cooperation between FAO and WTO;
  - Stressed the importance of enhancing the efficiency and transparency of fisheries value chains and requested FAO to continue to provide technical expertise and support in this area, particularly regarding food loss and waste, market access, compliance with import requirements, traceability and the specific needs of SSF;
  - Recognized the importance of harmonizing catch documentation, and encouraged Members to use the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes;
  - Reiterated the importance of the scientific advice provided by FAO to other international instruments and mechanisms, particularly the Codex Alimentarius and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and encouraged FAO to engage with CITES with the aim of increasing harmony in the assessment of CITES listing proposals for aquatic species;
  - Invited FAO to accelerate the development of the FAO Guidance on Social Responsibility in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Value Chains;
  - Reaffirmed the role of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (COFI:FM) as a technical forum with which to identify priority issues, advance discussions, and propose future work on how to improve fisheries management in line with the Code and related instruments;
  - Encouraged FAO to develop and deliver a capacity development and training programme on data collection systems, stock assessment and fisheries management.
- Requested FAO's assistance to address challenges in market access, fisheries statistics and cross-border trade, especially for Small-Scale Fisheries within the context of fish trade and the updating of the FAO ecolabeling guidelines;
- Noted FAO's increased engagement in international processes and the provision of its fisheries management and aquaculture expertise to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, marine and inland water conservation, and the sustainable and inclusive use of aquatic resources;
- Noted the progress of Members States on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for

Responsible Fisheries and related instruments, but also expressed concerns about the reduced number of submissions to the questionnaire for monitoring the implementation of the Code and related instruments;

- Stressed the need to strengthen efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing while noting the progress reported by FAO members in combatting IUU fishing;
- Recognized the significant contributions of inland fisheries and aquaculture production to food security, nutrition and sustainable livelihoods, and emphasized the importance of taking an ecosystem-based approach to their management;
- Suggested the integration of water-basin frameworks into inland fisheries management at regional, sub-regional and national levels;
- Acknowledged the support provided by FAO in addressing climate change impacts on aquatic food systems and welcomed the development of an Action Plan as part of FAO's Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031, while acknowledging the role of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) in addressing climate change impacts on fisheries and ecosystems;
- Recognized the role that Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) play in considering biodiversity in the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources, and called on FAO to continue to strengthen its support to RFBs, including through the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN);
- Supported the continued presence of fisheries and aquaculture across the FAO Strategic Framework (2022–2031) Priority Programme Areas, and their contribution to the SDGs; and recognized Blue Transformation as the Organization's vision to maximize the contribution of sustainable aquatic food systems to food security, nutrition and livelihoods; and
- Approved its multi-year work programme for 2024-2027.

#### **Main decisions and recommendations from Thirty-second Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC-32)**

5. EIFAAC-32 was held in Pula, Croatia, from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The Session was attended by 50 participants, including delegates from 28 EIFAAC Member States and two observers.

6. The Commission adopted two new Resolutions: 1) On inland fisheries statistics and information for management, and 2) On creating an enabling environment for freshwater aquaculture development. These Resolutions address the need for data collection, monitoring, information systems and increasing capacity to better inform inland fisheries management and conservation, and the concern raised by the Commission about the stagnation of freshwater aquaculture production over the last decades in the EIFAAC competence area. Four Resolutions and one Recommendation from EIFAAC-31 were amended by the Session and also adopted: 1) On EIFAAC Resolutions, Recommendations and Advisory Notes; 2) On the Code of Conduct for Recreational Fisheries and Invasive Alien Species; 3) On the protection of vulnerable and endangered fish species from unsustainable predation from cormorants; 4) On small-scale fisheries and aquaculture; and 5) On the Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries. The Commission was also informed about the state of progress in the finalization and publication of the EIFAAC/CACFish Fish Stocking Guidelines

7. The Commission reviewed and endorsed the recommendations from the EIFAAC international symposium on “Building a sustainable future for inland fisheries and aquaculture in a time of multiple stressors”, which was held in Pula, Croatia, from 7-9 October 2024, and attended by 120 participants from 24 countries. EIFAAC expressed support to the declaration from the Panel discussion on the Future of European Freshwater Aquaculture, held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The Panel recommendations are summarized as:

- An assessment of the economic efficiency of freshwater aquaculture is needed for different technologies and business models, and consideration taken for the application of

- new technologies and their inclusion in traditional production systems or traditional business models;
- The adoption of innovative solutions should be encouraged through the development of appropriate regulations, simplified procedures, and improved access to funding. These solutions should focus on the development of sustainable fish production systems such as integrated-multitrophic aquaculture, the production of new species, and properly designed energy-efficient recirculating aquaculture systems;
  - New approaches and technologies that enable the inclusion of freshwater aquaculture into the circular economy should be evaluated;
  - It is necessary to consider the promotion of sustainable fish production in recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS), and the potential for using the nutrient rich wastewater from the recirculation system in hydroponics, thereby reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of the system;
  - The accumulated experience addressing climate change in aquaculture, no matter how brief, needs to be comprehensively analysed and used in planning further mitigation strategies. In addition to known challenges, climate changes also raises some unsolved issues that require a serious and responsible scientific response;
  - Special attention is required for the prevention and treatment of fish diseases;
  - There is a need to recognise that freshwater aquaculture has deep connections to cultural traditions, and that sometimes these traditions conflict with food safety and animal welfare issues;
  - There is a need to improve data collection and processing systems in the European freshwater aquaculture sector. This information can be used to improve the monitoring of the sector's performance;
  - It is necessary to promote the benefits of developing the freshwater aquaculture sector to all levels of society, from citizens to policy makers;
  - There is a need to improve processing and marketing strategies to provide diversified products that promote sales in new market segments, and beyond those of the traditional seasonal carp markets. This would also increase the demand for freshwater fish and promote the consumption of new species.

### **Eight Session of CACFish (CACFish-8)**

8. CACFish-8 was attended by four Member States: Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Türkiye. Seven non-CACFish Member States were invited to attend and were present, namely: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Two agencies of the United Nations were also present: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Commission was briefed on the main decisions and recommendations of the respective FAO Regional Conferences, Committees and regional fisheries bodies.

9. The Session witnessed interactive discussions about how the Commission could establish operational collaborations with the private sector and associations of fishers and fish farmers. There was a suggestion that the Commission strengthen its operational capacity through activities to be funded through external budgetary resources.

10. The Commission echoed the need to increase the number of CACFish Member States, and invited the participating non-CACFish Member States that were present at the Session to consider formally joining the Commission.

11. The Commission reviewed the key outcomes and main recommendations of the following thematic areas tabled by the Sixth Meeting of TAC: (i) status and role of species diversification in aquaculture; (ii) development of a regional safety code of practice for aquaculture and fisheries; (iii)

the development of a CACFish data collection system to record fishing gears; and (iv) a regional synthesis of gender in the aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

12. The Commission agreed on its workplan for the 2023–2025 intersessional period.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE**

13. The Committee is invited to:

- Note the discussions, recommendations and decisions of the respective FAO fisheries governing bodies and CACFish, and
- Provide further guidance, as appropriate, regarding the implementation of these recommendations and decisions.