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Organization of the
United Nations



GUIDELINES for SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE



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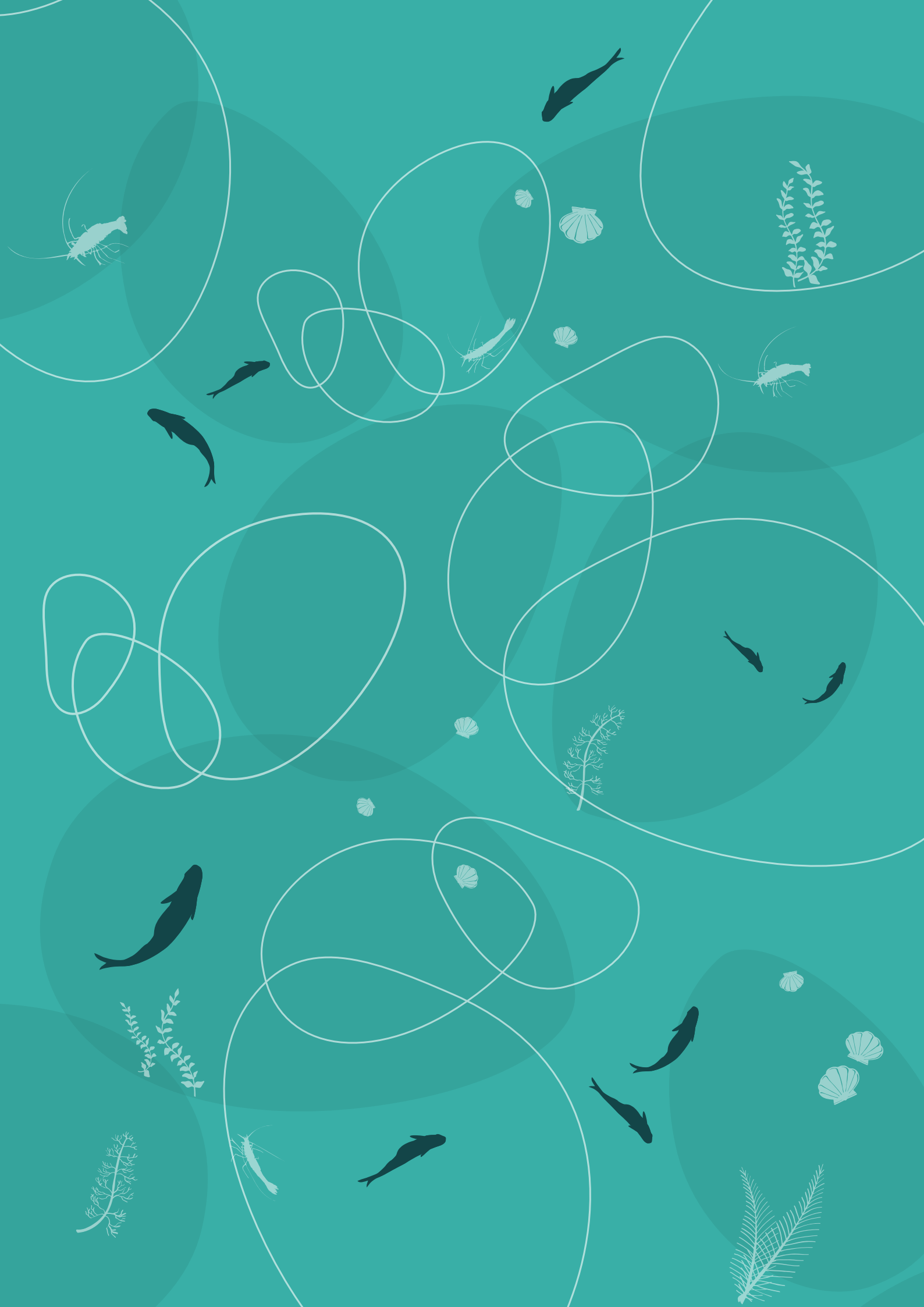
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PREPARATION OF THE GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE (GSA)

A draft of the GSA (Draft) was presented as COFI:AQ/XI/2022/INF.9 to the Eleventh Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ) in May 2022. The Session recommended its review by Members with a view to its finalization. A virtual meeting of a Members' Task Force was convened in January 2023. The Task Force reviewed the Draft and requested FAO to finalize the Draft and submit it to the Twelfth Session of COFI:AQ for guidance. The Draft was presented as COFI:AQ/XII/2023/INF.8 to the Twelfth Session of COFI:AQ. On 19 May 2023, the Twelfth Session of COFI:AQ approved the revised final version of the GSA and endorsed its submission to the next Session of COFI (COFI 36) for adoption (FAO, 2023). On 12 July 2024, the 36th Session of COFI adopted the GSA.



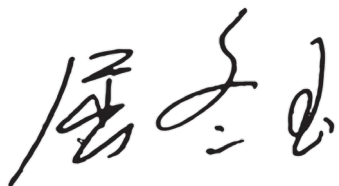
FOREWORD

Aquaculture plays a crucial role in providing food, nutrition, income and livelihoods for the world's growing population. In 2022, for the first time in history, aquaculture surpassed capture fisheries as the main source of aquatic animal production, representing nearly 51 percent of the world total. Rich in high-quality protein, essential fatty acids, minerals, and vitamins, aquatic animals and algae produced through aquaculture offer an efficient way to supply nutritious foods.

Aquaculture growth indicates its capacity to further help meet the rising global demand for aquatic foods and its significant contribution to global food security, nutrition and sustainable development. As the world continues to face increasing challenges to achieve global food security and nutrition and the Sustainable Development Goals, aquaculture offers innovative and resilient solutions that can help accelerate the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. But future expansion and intensification must prioritize profitability, sustainability and benefit farmers, regions and communities most in need.

The Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA), developed by Members of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through a transparent intergovernmental process, mark a major milestone. They provide a comprehensive framework with technical advice for policymakers and stakeholders at all levels – international, regional, national and local – on how to expand and intensify aquaculture responsibly. They highlight the need to balance social, economic and ecological well-being, while increasing productivity and profitability in the sector. Adopted at the 36th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries in July 2024, the GSA are the first-ever international instrument dedicated to aquaculture and are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the FAO Blue Transformation Roadmap.

The GSA serve as a powerful tool to support countries and partners to pursue aquaculture in a way that benefits both people and the planet, producing healthy and nutritious foods for a growing population in the face of the climate crisis and ecosystem degradation. Practiced sustainably, aquaculture will be instrumental in defeating hunger and achieving a world with better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life - leaving no one behind.



Qu Dongyu

Director-General

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



PREFACE

The GSA have been developed to support the implementation of the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the United Nations Decades for Ecosystem Restoration and Family Farming. As such, the GSA support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of the important role of aquaculture in contributing to global, regional and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty and to support socioeconomic development for the benefit of current and future generations, in full respect of the environment, ensuring restoration and protection of aquatic habitats, biodiversity and ecosystems.

Aquaculture is a millennia-old activity that has expanded slowly for centuries, integrating with natural, social, economic, and cultural environments. Since the 1970s, aquaculture has experienced rapid expansion and major developments as the fastest-growing food production industry, fueled by scientific progress, technological innovations, and investment, amid a consistently and sharply increasing global demand for aquatic foods. Expansion and intensification of the aquaculture sector has been a major factor in the doubling of global per capita fish consumption since 1960, making increasing contributions to the provision of food and livelihoods for a growing population. FAO projects further increase in production, consumption and trade of aquatic food products, accelerated mainly by a sustained growth in aquaculture.

However, some of these developments have caused undesirable social and environmental impacts, leading to conflicts between users of land, water, and living aquatic resources, and negatively affecting the aquatic environment, its biodiversity and its valuable ecosystem services. In particular, concerns remain regarding habitat destruction and modification; the irresponsible and unregulated use of chemicals and veterinary medicines; the impact of escapees on wild fish stocks, and the use of feed ingredients that are not sustainably sourced.

In 1995, Members adopted the CCRF as the reference framework for national, regional, and international efforts to ensure sustainable production, harvesting and utilization of living aquatic resources in harmony with the environment, considering all their relevant biological, technological, economic, social, environmental and commercial aspects.

Several other international instruments and initiatives of relevance to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture have been developed and implemented concurrently to the CCRF (Annex 1). They address responsible governance principles of tenure, equitable livelihoods, sustainable resources management, including feed, biological diversity, biosecurity, environmental protection, climate change and natural disasters, social responsibility and gender equality, international trade, responsible investment, innovation and science. While there is a great

need for further improvements, significant progress has been made in several areas of aquaculture research, technology and practice.

The FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 supports the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for achieving better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, leaving no one behind. The four betters represent aspirations and organizing principles for how FAO intends to contribute directly to its three guiding SDGs: SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), as well as support the broader SDG agenda, crucial for attaining FAO's overall vision. The FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 focuses on 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) addressing the various food and agriculture sectors and representing important building blocks to support FAO work and the 2030 Agenda. FAO also applies four cross cutting/cross sectional accelerators: *technology, innovations, data and complements (governance, human capital and institutions)* in its programmatic interventions to accelerate progress and maximize efforts to realize its aspirations: *the four betters*.

Blue Transformation, a vision for FAO's work on aquatic food systems, is a targeted effort by which agencies, countries and communities use existing and emerging knowledge, tools and practices to secure and sustainably maximize the contribution of aquatic food systems to food security, nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all. The three global objectives of Blue Transformation are: i) sustainable aquaculture intensification and expansion satisfy global demand for aquatic foods and distribute benefits equitably; ii) effective management of all fisheries delivers healthy stocks and secures equitable livelihoods; and iii) updated value chains ensure the social, economic and environmental viability of aquatic food systems.

In 2017, the 9th Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ) of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) called for the identification of successful initiatives in support of sustainable aquaculture and their documentation and compilation into the GSA, towards better implementation of the CCRF and achievement of the SDGs through the contributions of the aquaculture sector. In this regard, FAO carried out a global process to consult its Members, partners and stakeholders including representatives of farmers, civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, regional organizations and academia, to develop the GSA.

The GSA recognize that countries have diverse challenges, needs and capacities with respect to aquaculture development, including in relation to aquatic resources, infrastructure, investment, institutions, levels of education and technical capacities. At the same time, there are major common challenges and opportunities at national, regional and global levels.

At the request of FAO Members, the GSA aim to provide a clear direction for the development of sustainable aquaculture and identify the concrete actions that need to be implemented for aquaculture to best contribute to food security, poverty alleviation, preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity and the broader goals of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMR	antimicrobial resistance
AqGR	aquatic genetic resources for food and agriculture
AquaGRIS	Aquatic Genetic Resources Information System
AVC	aquaculture value chain
BMPs	better management practices
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CBD	Convention on Biodiversity
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COFI	FAO Committee on Fisheries
COFI:AQ	COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CSOs	civil society organizations
EAA	Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture
EIA	environmental impact assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSA	Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture
HH	high health
ICT	information and communications technology
IGOs	intergovernmental organizations
ILO	International Labour Organization
LCA	life cycle assessment
NAP	national adaptation plan

NDC	nationally determined contribution
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
MRA	mutual recognition agreement
PMP/AB	Progressive Management Pathway to Aquaculture Biosecurity
POs	professional organizations
PPA	Programme Priority Area
PPPs	public-private partnerships
REIOs	regional economic integration organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPF	specific pathogen-free
SPR	specific pathogen-resistant
SPS	sanitary and phytosanitary measures
TBT	technical barrier to trade
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health
WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA) were prepared at the request of Members in an inclusive, transparent and participatory manner under the guidance of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the FAO Committee on Fisheries. The GSA offer a comprehensive framework for the management and development of sustainable aquaculture and are designed to support Members and other stakeholders in the implementation of the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The GSA were created in response to the rapid expansion of aquaculture, the fastest-growing food production sector in the world, driven by scientific progress, technological innovations and investment, amid a consistently increasing global demand for aquatic foods. However, as with all food production sectors, this rapid growth has exposed challenges to the sustainability of aquaculture and raised concerns about potential negative impacts. The GSA provide a comprehensive framework for addressing these challenges.

The GSA consist of three sections: A) vision, objectives, scope and guiding principles; B) guidelines for promoting sustainable aquaculture; and C) implementation and monitoring. In line with the FAO Blue Transformation roadmap, which has a major pillar dedicated to the sustainable intensification and expansion of aquaculture, the GSA envision an aquaculture sector that contributes significantly to a world free from hunger and to the equitable improvement of the living standards of all actors in its value chain, including the poorest. The GSA have clear objectives, aiming to promote economic, social, and environmental sustainability, as well as animal health and welfare. They ensure transparency and accountability through participatory and consultative processes. The GSA are voluntary, global in scope, apply to diverse aquaculture contexts, systems, scales, species, environments, and activities, and recognize linkages with sectors like fisheries, agriculture, forestry, wildlife, tourism, energy, mining, and transportation. They are designed to be adaptable to different contexts and to support the development of sustainable aquaculture practices tailored to local conditions. They are intended to be updated periodically to reflect new developments and emerging issues in the aquaculture sector.

The GSA recognize that governance and planning form the foundation of sustainable aquaculture, promoting principles like accountability, equity, and efficiency. Effective governance minimizes risks to both society and farmers, ensuring proper resource allocation and fostering a secure environment for investment. Aquaculture, employing and utilizing diverse farming systems and species, benefits from traditional and innovative management practices. Responsible production, both through use of unfed species and improvements to the feed and feed management of fed species, improves resource use efficiency and reduces environmental impact. Challenges like water access, greenhouse

gas (GHG) emissions and pollution require solutions like water recycling and nutrient recovery. Effective management of aquatic biodiversity and genetic resources is essential for healthy ecosystems, human well-being and efficient production systems.

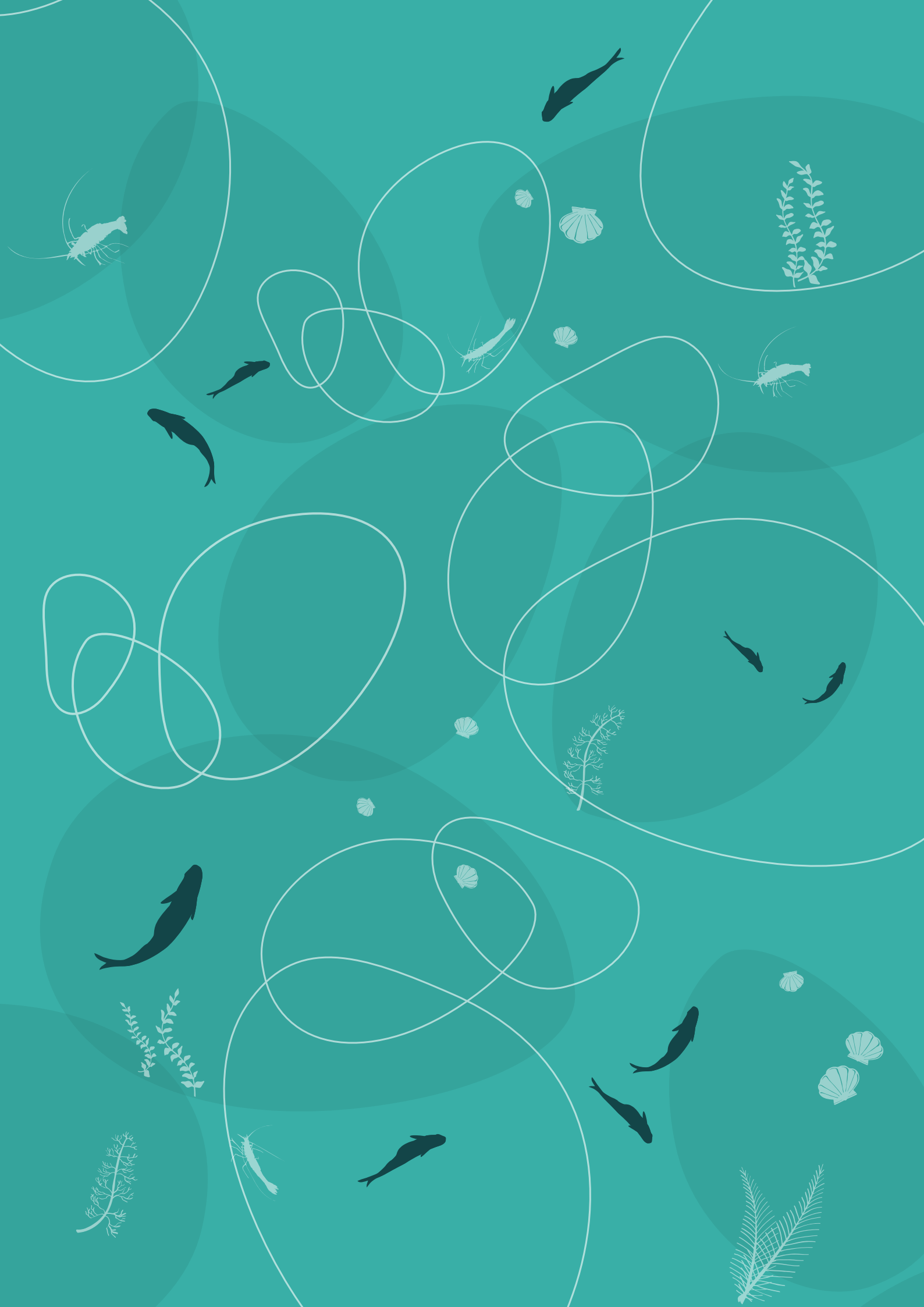
Aquaculture products should be integrated into nutrition-sensitive, circular, and sustainable food systems. Social responsibility, equity, equality and decent livelihoods are vital for a sustainable sector, recognizing the important role of women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups, Indigenous communities and ethnic minorities, small-scale farmers and people with disabilities. A competitive value chain, including post-harvest, processing, logistics, and quality control, is essential for sustainable development and equitable sharing of benefits. Market access, facilitated by agreements and adherence to standards, is crucial and requires public-private partnerships.

Key services such as extension, training, funding and technology access, support expansion and uptake, supported by digitization to enhance productivity and networking for knowledge transfer. Implementation of the GSA requires action by both States and stakeholders. The GSA can be implemented by designating a competent authority or task force for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the implementation of the GSA to the relevant authority. Implementation should consider enhancing technical cooperation, building partnerships, financial assistance, institutional capacity development, knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences.

Building on these principles, the GSA provide concrete recommendations. States should develop and implement effective policy and planning, legal and institutional frameworks including designation of suitable areas for aquaculture development through the use of spatial planning tools and the integration of aquaculture into public policies for food system and economic development. States should manage natural resources and farm businesses sustainably, consider ecosystem conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and resiliency, and include protection of aquatic biodiversity, managing genetic resources, enhancing sustainability of aquaculture seed and feed supply, strengthening biosecurity and improving animal welfare. States should enhance social responsibility, decent work, youth employment and gender equality, including women's empowerment, in aquaculture. States should establish sustainable aquaculture value chains, transparent and predictable market access and trade, and work to reduce food loss and food waste.

The GSA present a comprehensive and adaptable framework designed to address the challenges posed by the rapid growth of the aquaculture sector and support its sustainable expansion and intensification. Envisioning a sector that contributes to global food security and uplifts living standards, the GSA underscore the importance of governance, responsible production, and social considerations. By emphasizing principles such as accountability,

equity, and efficiency, they aim to minimize risks and ensure sustainable resource allocation. To achieve these goals, collaboration among States and stakeholders is crucial, and States are encouraged to facilitate the use of national-level platforms to implement the GSA. The GSA, designed for global applicability, acknowledge the dynamic nature of the aquaculture sector and are designed to be periodically updated to reflect emerging issues, thereby promoting continuous improvement and adaptation in the pursuit of sustainable aquaculture development.



PART A

VISION, OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The vision of the GSA is an aquaculture sector that contributes significantly to a world free from hunger and to equitable improvement of the living standards of all actors in its value chain, including the poorest, and:

- advances towards more productive, efficient, resilient, climate-smart and socially and environmentally responsible agrifood systems;
- fulfils its potential to meet the increasing demand for safe, healthy, accessible and affordable aquatic foods and aquatic products with reduced impacts on the global environment;
- contributes to sustainable development and helps to eradicate poverty, malnutrition and hunger; and
- matures in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way.

The objectives of the GSA are to:

- provide normative guidance for the development and implementation of public policies, strategies, and plans and legal and institutional frameworks for sustainable aquaculture growth;
- enhance the contribution of aquaculture to global food security, nutrition and poverty eradication as well as societal wellbeing and economic development;
- improve the socioeconomic situation of communities depending on aquaculture for their livelihoods through decent work and economic growth; and
- contribute towards achieving the sustainable use, responsible management, conservation and restoration of living aquatic resources, ecosystems and biodiversity consistent with the CCRF and other international instruments relevant to aquaculture, as well as climate change mitigation (Annex 1).

2. NATURE AND SCOPE

The GSA are voluntary. They are global in scope and should be adapted to apply to aquaculture in its varied contexts, systems, scales (including subsistence, commercial small, medium and large-scale, individual or corporate operations), farmed species and farmed types (including fed and unfed species of aquatic animals, plants and microorganisms), environments (including marine, brackish and freshwater), location (including rural, urban

and peri-urban zones) and activities, including feed and seed production, grow-out and post-harvest activities.

The GSA focus on the aquaculture sector while recognizing the important linkages between aquaculture and other sectors such as fisheries, agriculture, forestry, wildlife, tourism, energy production, mining and transportation.

The GSA are addressed to FAO Member and non-Member States (hereinafter, “States”), subregional, regional, international, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), professional organizations (POs), CSOs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and the research community, the private sector and other stakeholders including decision makers and groups along the aquaculture value chain (AVC).

The GSA should be interpreted and applied in a manner compatible with national policies, legal systems and their institutions and which ensures transparency and accountability, including through effective participatory and consultative processes, so that the voices of men, women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups and people with disabilities are considered.

The GSA should be interpreted and applied in a responsible manner consistent with existing rights and obligations under national and international law with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable regional and international instruments. They are complementary to and support national, regional, and international initiatives that address sustainable aquaculture. Nothing in the GSA should be interpreted as limiting or undermining any rights or obligations to which a State or Regional Economic Integration Organization (REIO) may be subject under international law. The GSA may be used to guide updates, amendments and inspire new or supplementary policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and better management practices (BMPs).

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The GSA are based on principles, standards and practices of sustainable development according to the 2030 Agenda and its relevant SDGs, the CCRF and other instruments (Annex 1) with relevant bearing on sustainable aquaculture development, namely:

- a) Sustainability: striving to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability, animal health and welfare and viability in aquaculture through governance frameworks and strategies that reflect local, national or regional realities, are climate-smart, socially, economically and environmentally sound.
- b) Environmental stewardship: responsibly using and protecting the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices to quantifiably enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being.

- c) Rule of law: adopting laws and regulations that are widely accessible, applicable to all, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, consistent with obligations under national, regional and/or international law, and with due regard to commitments under voluntarily applicable regional and international instruments.
- d) Non-discrimination and respect of cultures: promoting the elimination of all kinds of discrimination in policies and in practice in aquaculture and recognizing and respecting existing forms of organization, traditional and local knowledge, and practices of aquaculture communities.
- e) Equity and equality: promoting justice and fair treatment – both legally and in practice – for all, including the enjoyment of all human rights, using affirmative action or preferential treatment where required, to achieve equitable outcomes and equal opportunities, particularly for women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups, Indigenous communities and ethnic minorities, small-scale farmers and people with disabilities.
- f) Consultation and participation: ensuring free effective and informed participation of all aquaculture stakeholders in decision-making, promoting strong partnerships among different actors and conflict resolution mechanisms considering existing power imbalances between different individuals and groups.
- g) Transparency and accountability: clearly defining, widely publicizing, and making accessible policies, laws, regulations, procedures, and decisions, holding individuals, public institutions, and non-state actors responsible for their actions and decisions according to the principles of the rule of law.
- h) Holistic and integrated approaches: recognizing, adopting and implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA) as a key strategy for the integration of aquaculture activities within the wider ecosystem such that it promotes sustainable development, equity, and resilience of interlinked social-ecological systems and ensures effective coordination among the various relevant sectors and reconciles economic, social, and environmental objectives; and ensuring the integration of aquaculture in a sustainable food system approach.



PART B

GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

Sustainable aquaculture is generally understood as the practice of producing safe aquatic foods and associated products in a manner that is environmentally and socially responsible, economically viable, and able to meet the needs of present and future generations. It involves using production systems and technologies that minimize negative impacts on the environment, livelihoods and communities and promotes the long-term health and productivity of aquatic ecosystems.

Sustainable aquaculture practices may include using non-fed aquaculture, recirculating aquaculture systems or integrated aquaculture, to reduce the use of water and land resources and minimize waste. They may also involve sourcing feed and other inputs from sustainable sources, conservation and effective management of aquatic biodiversity, minimizing the use of antibiotics and other chemicals, and ensuring high animal welfare standards.

Sustainable aquaculture should be guided by robust governance frameworks, well targeted policies, strategies and proper planning and transparent, predictable and enforceable legislation, underpinned by effective capacity building. Further it proactively considers social and economic factors, such as long-term profitability and competitiveness, fair labour practices and community involvement, and gender equality, to ensure that the industry is not only environmentally sustainable but also socially responsible and economically viable in the long term.

This section contains conditions and actions required to make sustainable aquaculture development happen. The list is not exhaustive and may be complemented with additional conditions and actions based on the regional or national specificities and complexities of the social-economic-environmental context, aquaculture farming systems, geographical locations, species, technology, scale, practices and ecosystem services.

4. GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING

Governance and planning of aquaculture are parts of the backbone of the sector sustainability. Principles of good governance, such as accountability, equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services, and predictability of the rule of law, are means of achieving sustainability.

Both governance and planning reduce risks to society, but also risks and transaction costs to farmers. In the absence of effective governance and proper planning, there will be misallocation of resources. Without the rule of law, there will be little security, so farmers will have no incentive to take risks or to invest.

4.1 Governance frameworks

Aquaculture governance is the set of processes by which a jurisdiction manages its aquaculture resources and defines how aquaculture stakeholders participate in making and implementing decisions affecting the development of aquaculture. Governance frameworks determine how decision-makers are held accountable to aquaculture stakeholders and ensure observance and enforcement of applicable laws and regulations in collaboration with national, regional and international organizations as appropriate, thereby, fostering adherence to the rule of law.

Having and enforcing implementation of good aquaculture governance frameworks is one of the necessary conditions for the sector to fully realize its potential for growth and prosper over time. Such frameworks, which should be comprehensive and inclusive, take into consideration the specificities and complexities of the social-economic-environmental context and the diversity of aquaculture systems, geographical locations, species, technology, scale, practices and ecosystem services, and should include policy, institutional and administrative, and legal and regulatory frameworks.

4.1.1 Policy frameworks

States should:

- 4.1.1.1 Recognize and prioritize, as appropriate, aquaculture in national food development strategies and plans, and ensure the integration of aquaculture within national food security and nutrition, health and climate policies and action plans.
- 4.1.1.2 Develop and ensure implementation of policies, strategies and plans, laws and regulations, institutional and administrative arrangements that promote economically efficient, environmentally friendly, technically feasible, and socially responsible aquaculture and encourage the active engagement of the private sector and civil society in these processes.
- 4.1.1.3 Promote effective and transparent consultation and participation of all stakeholders and entities involved in or impacted by aquaculture in the processes of establishing, reviewing and implementing policy, legal and institutional frameworks to ensure that their interests are taken account of.

- 4.1.1.4 Provide procedures and mechanisms in national legal frameworks for the review of decisions and actions of public institutions and other aquaculture stakeholders and reporting, auditing and enforcement to ensure accountability for decisions and actions.
- 4.1.1.5 Establish and publish directives, mechanisms and processes to clarify the relationship between different aquaculture stakeholders and their respective rights and responsibilities, grant security and enforceability of property and lease rights, tenure and land and water access rights and facilitate their access to aggrieved stakeholders.
- 4.1.1.6 Build coherence between the policy frameworks of the aquaculture sector and those of other sectors including fisheries, agriculture, water and forestry, investment, trade and the environment to provide a predictable and transparent environment for investment in aquaculture.
- 4.1.1.7 Promote safe and nutritious aquatic foods in national food-based dietary guidelines, school feeding programmes, and other food and nutrition strategies.
- 4.1.1.8 Ensure that public incentives for aquaculture, fiscal or otherwise, if provided in the overall policy and/or legal frameworks, support the implementation of and promote compliance with such policy and legal frameworks as well as applicable codes of BMPs.
- 4.1.1.9 Require the industry to provide accurate and reliable data, statistics and reports to enable the competent authority to design appropriate policies, strategies, plans and laws and regulations.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 4.1.1.10 Reconcile the multiple and sometimes competing objectives of aquaculture development to ensure optimum utilization of resources, equitable distribution of the costs and benefits, long-term viability and transparency, consistency, and fairness in making and enforcing decisions and developing national programmes by involving stakeholder representatives in the processes from the onset.
- 4.1.1.11 Deliver efficiently or enable efficient delivery of essential services and tools for sustainable aquaculture development, providing incentives, and supporting market instruments.

4.1.2 Institutional and administrative frameworks

States should:

- 4.1.2.1 Designate a competent authority or authorities with clearly specified roles and responsibilities to administrate aquaculture.

- 4.1.2.2 Establish clear and predictable processes as appropriate for authorizing or permitting aquaculture activities (e.g. licensing of farms), avoid unnecessary administrative burden and cost, administrative layers at local and national levels, and facilitate communication and interaction between applicants and decision-making authorities, for example by establishing a single-window approach.
- 4.1.2.3 Enhance coordination and cooperation among the different authorities competent on different aspects relevant for aquaculture development (for example sanitary, environmental, health, water, etc.) in order to facilitate the development of relevant legislation applicable to aquaculture as well as its implementation and to ensure streamlined administrative procedures. If possible, establish a national platform including all relevant competent authorities responsible for aquaculture at national and local levels.
- 4.1.2.4 Clearly delineate administrative and decision-making responsibilities, delegate decision-making to the competent authority, define and approve criteria for making decisions in advance, make timely decisions, and put in place a mechanism for appealing administrative decisions.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 4.1.2.5 Create inclusive networks and dialogue platforms involving competent public authorities at different levels, and other actors such as aquaculture producer organizations, cooperatives, clusters, research, knowledge and innovation institutions, NGOs and CSOs. These networks and platforms can foster shared understanding and negotiated solutions and facilitate policy and decision-making processes relevant to sustainable aquaculture sector development.
- 4.1.2.6 Support, international, regional and subregional cooperation to enhance capacity development including appropriate and mutually agreed upon and voluntary transfer of technology and information sharing.

4.1.3 Legal and regulatory frameworks

States should:

- 4.1.3.1 Establish, where possible, aquaculture-specific legislation and regulations while avoiding overregulation, overlapping, and conflicting legislations and regulations, and ensure national legal frameworks supporting aquaculture, including aquaculture-specific legislation, are aligned with international laws and applicable international instruments and standards including the CCRF (Annex 1).
- 4.1.3.2 Promote, where appropriate, the use of non-legally binding governance instruments such as a code of conduct, codes of practice, BMPs, good aquaculture practices, and economic incentives and disincentives, to supplement laws and regulations.

- 4.1.3.3 Ensure the early involvement of aquaculture competent authorities in the development of relevant legislation applicable to aquaculture.
- 4.1.3.4 Build relevant capacity and provide adequate human and financial resources to encourage compliance and implementation of legislation and regulations.

4.2 Planning

Planning for sustainable aquaculture growth implies two main dimensions; the first involves the formulation of sector policies, strategies and development plans; the second concerns spatial planning. Aquaculture must share the space, marine or inland, and other resources such as water, consider the needs of other users including farmers, fishers, transport and tourism, and prevent and mitigate negative impacts. This is accomplished through a proper planning and management of resource use, including through spatial planning. This enables countries to select the spatial area for developing their aquaculture, and the areas that must be free from aquaculture. This spatial selection must be carried out in a responsible manner in line with international instruments and agreed good practice; planning and management need to align aquaculture development objectives with wider development objectives, contribute to achieve sustainable development of local communities, minimize interference with existing enterprises and protect the ecosystem; and reconcile economic, social, and environmental objectives of relevant sectors while permitting the aquaculture sector to contribute to the national economy and benefit society in a sustainable manner.

States should:

- 4.2.1 Promote a holistic food system perspective, integrating the development of sustainable aquaculture, including upstream and downstream sectors (e.g. seed, feed, farming technology, processing, logistic, marketing, branding and digital infrastructure) with other sectors using land, water, aquatic resources and maritime space to develop joint objectives and integrated actions across these sectors.
- 4.2.2 Integrate the expansion of aquaculture into public policies for food systems and economic development to enable better planning and use of public resources including for investment in basic infrastructure across sectors to promote economies of scale that minimize running costs and render aquaculture operations competitive.
- 4.2.3 Adopt a clear, transparent, equitable and inclusive process to designate suitable areas for aquaculture and sites within each area. Best available knowledge and resources should be secured to perform scoping studies to enable spatial planning. The process should involve identifying and including relevant stakeholders from the beginning. It should also evaluate the potential environmental, social and economic impacts, as well as potential synergies and conflicts with other activities or protected areas. The entire process should be protected by a supportive framework

including appropriate guidance. Good practices need to be provided to the users and monitored by the competent authorities.

- 4.2.4 Pay special attention to the small-scale sector and support the establishment of cluster farming in suitable areas to enhance technical skills and value chain development through the application of good farming practices, continuous on-the-job training, marketing facilities and biosecurity practices.
- 4.2.5 Where appropriate, opportunities for developing offshore aquaculture, within national jurisdiction, and development of an adequate regulatory framework and support for research to address engineering and other challenges should be explored.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

Apply EAA as the key strategy for planning and management for aquaculture, and specifically: take account of the landscape/seascape approach with a full range of ecosystem products, functions and services, including biodiversity, and not threaten the sustained delivery of these to society or lead to their degradation beyond their capacity to regenerate; support the improvement of human well-being with equity for all stakeholders; consider the linkages and interactions across freshwater, brackish and marine environments, as appropriate; and, take account of the policies and goals of other relevant sectors, as appropriate.

- 4.2.6 Design area management plans to ensure that aquaculture development contributes to the sustainable development of local communities.
- 4.2.7 Develop and provide data for spatial planning tools which take due account of the aquaculture stakeholders' interests and roles and apply spatial planning and management to allocate and manage suitable farming zones and farm sites.
- 4.2.8 The designation of suitable areas for aquaculture and sites within these areas should be accompanied by the setting up of appropriate mechanisms and plans in order to monitor the impact of the operations on environmental and social and economic sustainability.
- 4.2.9 Take into consideration the specific biological needs of the aquatic organisms in order to optimize production and productivity, minimize environmental impact, and stress and disease. This requires reconciling the physical, ecological, production and social carrying capacity of the ecosystem; economic profitability; risks and risk management; access to land and water and conflict mitigation among resource users; infrastructure; resilience to climatic change and other external threats and disasters; and improve transparent and efficient information sharing, and public perception and acceptability.

5. SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE, ECOSYSTEM AND FARM MANAGEMENT

Aquaculture is an important and rapidly growing food production sector. It utilizes diverse farming systems and a wide diversity of species, with traditional, improved and innovative management practices to increase production and provide employment.

Unfed aquaculture requires less resources and is particularly attractive for the delivery of valuable ecosystem services. At the same time, there is scope to reduce the environmental impact of fed aquaculture, such as pollution and global warming, by paying attention to scaling, site selection, and the health of the production environment.

Water access and usage can be significant challenges which may require further attention to promote water recycling systems, to reduce water consumption, and facilitate nutrient recovery and reuse.

Aquatic biodiversity is essential for healthy ecosystems and human well-being and aquaculture should be conducted in a manner that recognizes this importance and conserves and enhances it as a valuable resource for the future.

To ensure sustainable development of aquaculture, we need to integrate it into nutrition-sensitive, circular, and sustainable food systems. This will require promoting the sustainable management and use of resources and ecosystem management including by supporting the use of innovative farming systems such as polyculture, integrated agriculture-aquaculture farming, culture-based fisheries, integrated multi-trophic aquaculture and aquaponics.

5.1 Sustainable resources and ecosystem management

Aquaculture is reliant on the services provided by our ecosystems, which are impacted by human activities. It is important to ensure that aquaculture development does not have negative effects on the wider ecosystem by exceeding the environmental carrying capacity. Aquaculture can help restore ecosystems and provide valuable services, so practices that promote sustainability should be prioritized. To ensure long-term conservation and sustainable use of resources, everyone involved in managing land and water resources for aquaculture should take measures to protect them.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 5.1.1 Develop and implement national or regional strategies for sustainable use of water, land, genetic resources, and energy that address the needs and challenges of the aquaculture sector. Strategies should emphasize efficient water use and recirculation of water and facilitate nutrient recovery and reuse to reduce the carbon footprint of aquaculture and integrate it into nutrition-sensitive, circular, and sustainable food systems.

- 5.1.2 Conserve, protect, enhance, and restore aquatic ecosystems, their services, and their biodiversity, water, and soil resources, while preventing pollution of land, water, and the sea.
- 5.1.3 Reduce the environmental and carbon footprints of aquaculture by applying sustainable practices throughout production, processing, transportation, storage, and feed manufacturing, including decreasing the use of veterinary medicines.
- 5.1.4 Apply the concepts of environmental and social carrying capacity in aquaculture planning, use environmental impact assessment as appropriate, and monitor aquaculture operations to prevent and minimize environmental risks.
- 5.1.5 Promote low-trophic aquaculture species such as filter-feeding finfish, algae/seaweeds, and bivalve molluscs that are properly managed to provide ecosystem services and reduce negative impacts on surrounding ecosystems.
- 5.1.6 Promote aquaculture systems that provide habitat and refuge for both terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, where appropriate.
- 5.1.7 Encourage energy efficiency and the use of clean and renewable energies.
- 5.1.8 Promote the recirculation of water and co-products in the feeding process.
- 5.1.9 Develop waste management systems that minimize the environmental footprint of aquaculture activities.
- 5.1.10 Develop and disseminate guidance that addresses BMPs for the management and use of aquaculture resources, supported by regular and targeted training.
- 5.1.11 Promote sustainable intensification of aquaculture and farm management by improving farm design and infrastructure, adopting up-to-date technologies at scale, promoting digitalization, on-farm recirculation and treatment of waste, using physical, biological, and responsible chemical methods, and monitoring and recycling “waste-streams” or underutilized aquaculture nutrients through regenerative, multi-trophic, and integrated aquaculture systems.
- 5.1.12 Expand aquaculture in locations where it is feasible and has potential for sustainable development. Assess social and economic viability, adopt appropriate environmental precautions and social safeguards, and ensure aquaculture expansion is responsible, exists within the environmental carrying capacity, and does not negatively affect biodiversity, ecosystems, or livelihoods.
- 5.1.13 Set an appropriate balance between species diversification and concentration on key species, that best meets market demands and responds to the drivers of species use and adopt farm production and management schedules that align with market requirements and are responsive to environmental constraints.
- 5.1.14 Prevent and/or mitigate litter from aquaculture gear.

5.2 Integration of aquaculture with agriculture and other sectors

Aquaculture can work together with agriculture and other sectors to improve efficiency and sustainability by using innovative management systems and production practices. In coastal areas, integration of aquaculture with tourism or energy sectors can deliver important synergies, and in inland areas its integration into local and small-scale farming systems can be a catalyst especially for poor communities to address the wider challenges of improving food and nutrition security, increasing farm biodiversity and building resilience to climate change.

Integration will lead to better use of resources, such as fisheries, water, land, and forests, and restore ecosystem services and functions. By planning and making decisions together, we can manage our natural and human resources more effectively and meet the diverse needs of society in the short, medium, and long term. This approach will optimize the sustainable use of resources by addressing the complex linkages among different resource users.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 5.2.1 Promote the integration of aquaculture with agriculture and other sectors by preparing and implementing supportive national policies, regulations and legislation.
- 5.2.2 Encourage diversification of food production and income by integrating aquaculture with other systems, such as combined rice and fish farming, aquaponics, and other integrated farming practices. This will enhance sustainability, productivity, efficiency, and resilience of people, communities, and ecosystems.
- 5.2.3 Support research and innovation partnerships that promote integrated agriculture-aquaculture farming systems involving multiple stakeholders.
- 5.2.4 Promote the integration of aquaculture with fisheries through culture-based fisheries and stock enhancement, especially in seasonal water bodies, while preserving ecosystems and biodiversity.
- 5.2.5 Recognize aquaculture's role in the social and biophysical interlinkages of food and ecosystems and strengthen the application of participatory processes such as the EAA as a strategy for aquaculture's further integration.
- 5.2.6 Develop and promote innovative technologies for nutrient recycling and monitoring from aquaculture effluent to ensure safe reuse within the ecosystem through integrated and circular economy approaches.

5.3 Conservation of aquatic biodiversity, genetic resource management and sustainable seed supply

Sustainable aquaculture development requires effective management of genetic resources for both wild stocks (for conservation and as a resource for aquaculture) and for farmed types used in aquaculture. Effective management of aquatic genetic resources for food and agriculture (AqGR) should be informed by robust data on the national, regional, and global status of AqGR which should also help ensure that AqGR will be represented in the future developments and monitoring of the status of global biodiversity within international instruments such as the SDGs and the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

There is huge potential to enhance productivity of domesticated farmed types through improved genetic management within aquaculture seed supply systems and the accelerated uptake of genetic improvement, with a focus on selective breeding. A prudential approach based on a risk assessment as outlined in the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development for Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture should be followed.

Conservation of aquatic biodiversity, including management of aquaculture's impact on this diversity, is of critical importance to the future sustainable development of aquaculture. It is thus important to apply risk assessment to introductions and transfers, especially for non-native species and developed farm types, and recognize and monitor species, wild stocks and farmed types under threat, and promote their effective conservation. The introduction of non-native species for the purposes of aquaculture should be subject to prior authorization based on this risk assessment.

5.3.1 Conservation of aquatic biodiversity and genetic resources

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 5.3.1.1 Mainstream conservation and effective management of AqGR and biodiversity in aquaculture and in the wild by implementing the initiatives established in international instruments including the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Global Plan of Action), the CBD Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (Annex 1).
- 5.3.1.2 Strengthen national institutions and adapt, develop or create strategies, policies and legislation to support effective management and monitoring of genetic resources.

- 5.3.1.3 Adopt measures from the aforementioned global instruments to mitigate the risk of harm to genetic resources, deliver equitable access and benefit sharing, prevent degradation of natural habitats, create conservation and/or species management areas where required, and explore incentives for valuing ecosystem services applied to biodiversity conservation and management.
- 5.3.1.4 Develop national registries of AqGR (for farmed types and wild stocks) using tools such as the FAO Aquatic Genetic Resources Information System (AquaGRIS), as a basis for understanding the status of the AqGR, the specific properties and characteristics of national AqGR, and to enable monitoring of the status of AqGR against specific indicators of progress in enhancing their management.
- 5.3.1.5 Recognize and monitor wild stocks and farmed types under threat and where necessary establish conservation programmes, prioritizing in situ conservation when possible, such as through aquatic protected areas and sustainable fisheries management, and supplemented by ex situ conservation in the form of live gene banks or in vitro gene banks such as cryo-conserved gametes or embryos, where necessary.
- 5.3.1.6 Seek synergies between aquaculture production and ecosystem restoration, habitat restoration, and species recovery.
- 5.3.1.7 Apply a precautionary approach based on sound risk assessment and adaptive management to minimize harmful effects of accidental or deliberate introductions and transfers of AqGR (including non-native species and developed farmed types).
- 5.3.1.8 Raise awareness of the importance of monitoring and managing the genetic status of farmed types, including through the provision of genetic monitoring tools, especially in major seed supply chains supporting large-scale aquaculture production. Support the sustainable use of the genetic resources through adherence to basic principles of genetic management, such as by maintaining adequate effective population size and avoiding uncontrolled hybridization.
- 5.3.1.9 Promote long-term selective breeding programmes (incorporating other innovative technologies such as genomic selection, with appropriate assessment of risk) through awareness raising, capacity building, appropriate research and development, supportive policies and legislation, and effective engagement of the private sector, with consideration of appropriate resourcing and/or outsourcing.

5.3.2 Sustainable seed supply

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 5.3.2.1 Develop national policies or strategies for seed supply to ensure a consistent supply of quality seed to meet producer demand. Such strategies should consider the role of infrastructure development, such as establishment of breeding nuclei

as a source of quality broodstock and decentralization of seed multiplication and promote credible seed certification schemes.

- 5.3.2.2 Strengthen broodstock domestication and development, supply chains and seed production and distribution systems that integrate effectively with the steps taken for the conservation, sustainable use and development of wild and farmed types of AqGR.
- 5.3.2.3 Ensure efficient use of broodstock to maximize seed production and integrate biosecurity measures into seed supply systems, for example through the supply of specific pathogen-free or pathogen resistant seed.
- 5.3.2.4 Recognize the respective roles of the public and private sectors in seed supply systems, especially in the case of genetic improvement programmes. Such programmes are necessarily long term and public sector programmes should look to build in options for transition to the private sector to ensure that programmes have long-term sustainability based on elements of cost recovery.
- 5.3.2.5 Build technical capacity in both public and private hatchery sectors related to genetic management, broodstock husbandry, seed and larval rearing methods, and seed transport to ensure maintenance of seed quality throughout seed supply chains.

5.4 Sustainable feed

Fed aquaculture species represent around half of total aquaculture production and their farming is projected to expand to meet the increasing demand for aquatic foods. Scientific and technological advances in feed formulation and processing have been part of the recent evolution of aquaculture.

The sustainability of fed aquaculture requires practices and systems that improve productivity while reducing costs and feed waste, as well as ensuring sustainable sourcing of ingredients and preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. Diversifying ingredient sources is fundamental to ensure availability and access. Developing ingredient alternatives, feed formulations and processing capacity can guarantee the expansion of aquaculture in distinct regions. Improving feed management practices is paramount for the sustainable intensification of aquaculture, allowing greater efficiency.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 5.4.1 Develop and implement national or regional strategies for supply of quality aquaculture feed based on sustainably sourced ingredients, appropriate to the national production sectors.

- 5.4.2 Promote the development and use of sustainably sourced ingredients (from all sources) in feed formulations, striving to achieve affordable, safe and healthy feeds and encouraging an increase in feed performance and reduction in environmental impact.
- 5.4.3 Follow FAO technical guidance in the use of wild fish and fish by-products as aquafeed to prevent and, where not possible, minimize negative impacts on livelihoods, food security and the environment and to ensure they come from sustainably managed fisheries, without compromising safety and quality of aquaculture products.
- 5.4.4 Support the gradual reduction and improve the efficiency of the use of wild fish stocks as feed.
- 5.4.5 Support investment in research and innovation to identify alternative feed ingredients notably from local resources, with good nutritional value that optimize feed conversion rates while being environmentally and socially sustainable. These may include insects, algae, single-cell proteins, agriculture by-products and fish/food processing wastes.
- 5.4.6 Promote feeding practices that avoid contamination by pathogens, parasites, heavy metals, antimicrobials (antibiotics, parasiticide, antifungal and antiviral medicines) and other substances potentially harmful to humans.
- 5.4.7 Engage with the feed industry to encourage the development and utilization of diversified and improved feeds that are precisely formulated and manufactured to meet the nutritional requirements of species and farmed types based on life cycle stage, genotype, environment and immune status, purpose of culture (food/seed). Such feeds should maintain or enhance product quality and the human health benefits of farmed aquatic foods.
- 5.4.8 Promote feeding strategies, feed management practices and production systems that ensure precision use of feeds and high conversion efficiency in aquaculture while contributing to reducing feed costs, feed waste and environmental pollution.
- 5.4.9 Develop systems to regulate the safe use of feed additives and support the development and safe use of natural feed ingredients or additives recognizing that feed ingredients and formulations may be proprietary trade information.
- 5.4.10 Encourage feed manufacturing waste reduction by optimizing production processes and practices and recycling of waste materials and improving storage conditions of feeds and feed ingredients to safeguard quality and guarantee a longer shelf life, including the use of eco-friendly packaging using recyclable or biodegradable materials.

5.5 Biosecurity and animal welfare

Healthy and resilient aquatic organisms, produced through good farming practices, disease prevention and long-term biosecurity management, are fundamental to sustainable aquaculture. Protecting the health and welfare of aquatic organisms requires the adoption of regulations and standards on health of aquatic organisms and on antimicrobial use, at all steps in the production cycle.

The implementation of biosecurity protocols requires a national aquatic organism health strategy and associated action plans, enforced by enhanced national capacities with cost-effective management of the risks posed by infectious agents. Furthermore, regulations and standards and their enforcement should be based on international instruments in order to meet technical requirements concerning biosecurity, health management and animal welfare.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 5.5.1 Develop and formalize as necessary national and regional strategies on aquatic organism health, taking into consideration the four-stage Progressive Management Pathway to Aquaculture Biosecurity (PMP/AB). Such strategies should contain short, medium and long-term national and regional action plans based on related needs and priorities, with an emphasis on augmenting collaboration among AVC players to support the implementation of the PMP/AB (Annex 1).
- 5.5.2 Enhance national capacities to diagnose, prevent and mitigate health risks and promote biosecurity, including in risk analysis, disease prevention, integrated disease and pest management, preparedness and rapid response to abnormal mortality events in aquatic populations, and encourage measures to improve aquatic organism health and welfare through good husbandry and biosecurity.
- 5.5.3 Promote the close cooperation of States and aquaculture stakeholders including various authorities involved in aquaculture in a transparent manner to meet international standards and control and manage transboundary diseases of aquatic organisms, through the rapid sharing of information on national disease status, new disease occurrences, and the spread of existing diseases.
- 5.5.4 Provide training for competent authorities and aquaculture workers on aquatic organisms' health and welfare management practices to ensure awareness of their roles and responsibilities in maintaining aquatic organism health and welfare and support and promote research and innovation.
- 5.5.5 Provide affordable and easy access to aquatic health support services (e.g. health monitoring, diagnostics, surveillance, disease outbreak investigation) and farm-level biosecurity practices to small-scale aquaculture producers through Farmer Field Schools, regular information dissemination and communication on disease prevention, and practical on-farm demonstration.

- 5.5.6 Promote reduction in the use of antimicrobials, develop the technical capacity and infrastructure needed to establish national action plans on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and enforce appropriate regulations, critical to ensure minimal, prudent and responsible use of veterinary medicines, including antimicrobials. These regulations should also promote the exploring alternatives to the use of antimicrobials in aquaculture including the development and use of vaccines, immunostimulants, phage therapy and medicinal plants.
- 5.5.7 Encourage and support aquaculture producers to implement measures for prevention, early detection and control to reduce the sector's exposure to exotic, endemic and emerging pathogens and diseases and thereby reduce the need for veterinary medicines, notably antimicrobials. This should be done through the dissemination and implementation of good husbandry and biosecurity practices, vaccination, use of specific pathogen free (SPF), specific pathogen resistant (SPR) and high health (HH) seed and farmed types.
- 5.5.8 Initiate, support and provide platforms to develop and establish public and private sector partnerships to deal with health and biosecurity challenges affecting the aquaculture sector.
- 5.5.9 Promote credible certification schemes using the guidance of the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification and World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) standards, particularly the pillar on animal health and welfare to enhance trust throughout the AVC.

5.6 Strategies to address climate change, natural disasters, pollution and pandemics

Climate resilient aquaculture and disaster risk reduction must be built on policies, strategies and plans developed in full and effective consultation with all aquaculture stakeholders, in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the FAO Strategy on Climate Change. The main natural and climate hazards can be identified through risk and vulnerability assessment.

It is necessary to encourage the transition towards more climate resilient practices in aquaculture, notably for decarbonizing aquaculture to supply low-carbon and nutrition-sensitive diets. At the same time, climate mitigation potential of certain types of aquaculture, where proven, should be enhanced (e.g., carbon sequestration by algae or mollusc farming). The contribution of aquaculture, including extensive practices, to the protection and restoration of marine, coastal and inland ecosystems in response to climate change impacts such as sea level rise or floods, should also be promoted.

States should:

- 5.6.1 Develop and implement policies and strategies that ensure that the role of aquaculture in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change are addressed in international instruments such as the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and in national adaptation plans (NAPs).
- 5.6.2 Recognize and proactively promote emerging opportunities for aquaculture arising from climate change due to the diversity of farmed types and culture systems available to the farmers.
- 5.6.3 Provide adaptation and mitigation strategies, and recovery and aid plans for aquaculture dependent communities affected by climate change and other disaster risks along with necessary assistance and support, in collaboration with the private sector and other partners.
- 5.6.4 Enhance national capacities for risk and vulnerabilities assessments, establish early warning systems and promote adoption of BMPs and other relevant instruments.
- 5.6.5 Plan and coordinate effective emergency response and disaster recovery for aquaculture dependent communities, applying the concept of the relief-development continuum, covering the immediate relief phase, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery phases, including the concept of 'building back better' with long-term development objectives.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 5.6.6 Strengthen climate change and disaster preparedness that involves contingency plans, coordination arrangements, public information and training, including: applying risk analysis for aquaculture planning and management; assessing sector vulnerabilities; implementing risk reduction and adaptation strategies, investing in monitoring and early warning systems; maintaining reserves of feed and equipment; promoting technologies and systems that increase the adaptive capacity of aquaculture; and building institutional capacity and support related training and technical assistance to producers to support climate resilient aquaculture practices.
- 5.6.7 Use systematic analysis tools, especially life cycle assessment (LCA) tools, to quantify the carbon footprint and analyse carbon emission "hotspots" in aquaculture production and value chains. This can help identify mitigation measures to further reduce the carbon emission intensity of aquaculture products and prevent the migration of carbon emissions along the AVC.
- 5.6.8 Apply proven genetic improvement approaches, with a focus on selective breeding, to develop farmed types adapted to changing environmental conditions caused by climate change (e.g. to expand temperature and salinity tolerances).
- 5.6.9 Develop and adopt improved farming systems that have greater adaptive capacity, enhancing resilience of the sector in response to climate change.

- 5.6.10 Develop and adopt climate-proofing innovations, which may include GHG emissions reduction technology, renewable energy systems such as co-locating aquaculture with wind turbines or photovoltaic power generation or using renewable energy for heating and cooling systems as well as hydropower, and using gravity fed effluent systems.

6. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, DECENT WORK AND GENDER EQUALITY

Enhancement of social responsibility, decent livelihoods, working conditions and gender equality are necessary for the development of a sustainable aquaculture sector that provides access to social protection, ensuring safe, healthy and fair working conditions, respecting labour rights, with mechanisms to prevent and halt forced labour, and with measures towards improving the standards of living. Acknowledgement by all parties of the critical role of women in aquaculture is necessary to promote women's equal access to, control over and benefit from natural resources, assets, markets, infrastructures, information, financial services, training and entrepreneurship.

6.1 Social responsibility and decent work

Social acceptability is one of the pillars of aquaculture sustainability. It refers to the degree to which aquaculture activities are accepted by the local communities, by various interest groups and by the wider society. Support by local communities, various interest groups and by the wider society is influenced by the perceived benefits that accrue to them. It also involves improving working conditions, providing social protection and promoting decent work in aquaculture in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, including the International Labour Organization (ILO). It requires that industry has an ethos of corporate social responsibility, which is the duty to support economic, environmental, cultural and social development to improve the quality of life of people, communities and society. This suggests that decent work in aquaculture is one of the necessary conditions for social acceptability of aquaculture ventures; it involves rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.

States should:

- 6.1.1 Enact and enforce labour policies which are sound, inclusive and non-discriminatory, taking in consideration the interests of the different groups working in aquaculture, with a particular focus on promoting and safeguarding the interests of women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups, people with disabilities, and future generations.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 6.1.2 Eliminate practices such as forced labour, prevent debt-bondage, child labour, and unfair payment; and otherwise enable fish farmers, aquaculture workers and business stakeholders to earn a fair return from their labour, investment and skills.
- 6.1.3 Promote responsible social practices in AVCs, including the respect of human and labour rights, decent work and equal pay, freedom of association, collective bargaining, social protection programmes and social dialogues.
- 6.1.4 Create conditions for men and women in aquaculture to work in an environment free from any sort of abuse, including but not limited to crime, forced labour, child labour, violence, organized crime activities, piracy, theft, sexual exploitation, corruption, and abuse of authority.
- 6.1.5 Support appropriate training of workers on good practices along the AVC and harness the full potential of all technological progress and digitalization to create decent jobs and sustainable enterprises in the sector.
- 6.1.6 Create adequate working conditions, and safety and health at work, and access to universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection, including the provision of accident, life and health insurance, and social insurance, regardless of the nature of their employment status or working arrangements in the formal or informal sector.

6.2 Youth empowerment

Young people can play a central role in aquaculture development. It is important to empower them to ensure that they play a leading role today and are active in shaping the future of aquaculture growth. Empowering them will require a tailored and multifaceted approach.

States should:

- 6.2.1 Develop national strategies and action plans targeting youth employment in aquaculture, establish aquaculture enterprise incubation programmes and infrastructure projects that hire and train young people and incentivize education institutions and private operators to do the same.
- 6.2.2 Incorporate aquaculture into educational curricula to offer students appropriate training and better prepare them for the job market in aquaculture.
- 6.2.3 Foster entrepreneurship in aquaculture and link entrepreneurship education and access to finance with the aim of making aquaculture attractive to youth.

- 6.2.4 Develop policies specific to disadvantaged young people such as equipping them with the practical, strategic and tactical tools they need to become financially self-sufficient through aquaculture.

States and other stakeholders should:

- 6.2.5 Create a network of operators and local institutions interested in building a governance system which promotes the development of new projects, and which distinguishes opportunities for young people.
- 6.2.6 Promote quality apprenticeships, informal or formal, and on-the-job training programmes in aquaculture to improve young people's skills as well as providing entry-level job opportunities to ensure school-to-work transition.
- 6.2.7 Build partnerships to scale-up youth-targeted investments in aquaculture to create decent jobs for youth.

6.3 Gender equality and women's empowerment in aquaculture

Aquaculture activities are often gender imbalanced. Acknowledgement by all parties of the critical role of women in aquaculture is necessary to promote women's equal access to, control over and benefit from natural resources, assets, markets, infrastructures, information, financial services, training and entrepreneurship.

States should:

- 6.3.1 Develop and implement evidence-based policies and legislation that promote gender equity in aquaculture and, as appropriate, revise, remove or repeal policies, legislation and measures that perpetuate the subjugation of women based on social, economic, historical or cultural aspects.
- 6.3.2 Develop gender-specific indicators and establish more efficient data collection systems, data collection infrastructures, produce homogeneous and consistent sex-disaggregated data to recognize women's contribution to the aquaculture sector development.
- 6.3.3 Mainstream gender equality in all aquaculture development strategies to secure women's equal voice and participation in decision-making processes, encouraging their participation in aquaculture organizations, and providing them with relevant organizational and leadership development support.
- 6.3.4 Adopt specific measures to address discrimination against women, while creating space for CSOs, women workers and their organizations, to participate in supporting and monitoring implementation.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 6.3.5 Promote women as agents of change by providing them opportunities to access decision-making and remunerative activities and redressing the gendered division of labour.
- 6.3.6 Encourage women and youth to participate in aquaculture organizations and provide them with relevant organizational and leadership development support. Engage value chain stakeholders at individual, household and community level to tackle social norms that constrain women's empowerment and decision-making power.
- 6.3.7 Support the development of and work in cooperation with women's collectives and organizations to facilitate access to credit and savings for women entrepreneurs; remove barriers to markets, including regional and international markets; increase women's bargaining power within the value chain and voice in decision-making processes; inform, promote and implement policies to eradicate gender-based violence.
- 6.3.8 Implement transformative actions for achieving gender equity and equality by facilitating the recruitment of more women in all areas of the AVC and ensuring their equal access to extension and technical services, legal and financial support, considering specific constraints, needs and priorities.

7. VALUE CHAINS, MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE

The sustainable development of aquaculture should always be associated with a competitive, efficient and inclusive value chain. A well performing value chain includes post-harvest, processing, logistics, cold chain, trade and quality control, etc., based on the local, external and international market needs.

To establish and improve the AVC, planning, regular monitoring and analysis should be conducted and enabling decision-makers and AVC actors to develop informed policies, strategies and suitable market instruments which promote sustainable aquaculture and value addition.

The AVC performance and competitiveness can be improved through policy interventions, public investment, capacity building, fiscal and economic incentives and public-private partnerships (PPPs), through a participatory approach with government institutions, professional organizations, private actors and other stakeholders.

Aquaculture development requires access to markets and market-based tools that can be used to improve the sustainability of aquaculture. Trade and market entry are facilitated by promoting mutual recognition agreements (MRA), the adoption of voluntary

standards, equivalence and transparency of standards and technical regulations, based on internationally agreed norms and on scientific evidence using the risk assessment methodology and recognized institutions.

7.1 Sustainable aquaculture value chains

A comprehensive AVC covers production and its inputs and is dependent on the length of the chain from the water to the plate, technical classifications, and on the management of resources.

A market driven approach helps to improve the effectiveness of the value chain, and good governance supports fair trade, transparent decision-making, appropriate use of technology innovations and improves the quality and efficiency of the value chain.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 7.1.1 Provide effective regulatory and support mechanisms that create an enabling environment for the development of AVCs and ensure their long-term sustainability, including infrastructure, technology, standards and BMPs.
- 7.1.2 Promote the integration of AVC actors and stakeholders, including inter-professional organizations, within the aquaculture business and policy environment to address access and entry barriers, the role and influence of the different AVC actors to facilitate equitable relationships and distribution of benefits and risks between AVC actors.
- 7.1.3 Promote AVC innovation and investment that increase consumer value, safety and nutritional benefits of aquaculture products, improve the efficiency of input use and reduce negative impacts along the entire AVC, including through research and development, species selection, products diversification, application of new technologies, and the wider adoption of market-based tools such as traceability, certification, eco-labelling, branding and digital applications.
- 7.1.4 Promote capacity building and access to relevant information and services in particular for small-scale aquaculture farmers and operators, women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups to help them adjust to changing conditions and benefit equitably from market opportunities, value addition, enhancing traceability and market competitiveness.

7.2 Transparent and predictable market requirements and international trade

An efficient AVC relies on international tools and standards to safeguard aquaculture workers, as well as consumers. Adequate knowledge and understanding of the value chain among its key stakeholders should ensure and protect the aquatic food resource, and the benefits of all stakeholders including the traders and consumers. Full traceability and transparency and predictability of markets should guarantee the rights of the suppliers, producers and consumers along the value chain.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 7.2.1 Promote access of farmers to markets and information with higher efficiency, transparency and competitiveness taking into consideration the specific needs of small-scale aquaculture farmers.
- 7.2.2 Ensure that market entry rules, standards and technical regulations are consistent with the national regulations and international agreements, such as World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements, in particular the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement and the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement, and standards and technical regulations on protecting the environment, consumers, animal health and welfare and social rights of AVC workers (Annex 1).
- 7.2.3 Promote the harmonization of technical regulations and standards for aquaculture products with internationally recognized norms, such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) for food safety and quality, FAO technical guidelines, the WOA, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for aquatic plants, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and the norms of other international organizations where applicable for biodiversity (Annex 1).
- 7.2.4 Promote the development of frameworks for the improvement and verification of aquatic product quality, traceability, and e-commerce.

7.3 Reducing aquatic food loss and food waste

Aquatic foods are highly perishable and as such easily susceptible to spoilage, especially under hot climates. This ultimately leads to food loss and waste. It is therefore paramount that appropriate actions be taken in time along the value chain to prevent and reduce losses.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 7.3.1 Develop enhanced policies and interventions to regulate production, distribution and traceability through implementing the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food

Loss and Waste Reduction. Support resilient and sustainable production, processing and consumption that minimizes, prevents and reduces losses, including through awareness raising, education and incentives.

- 7.3.2 Promote the application of the circular economy approach to reuse and recycle waste, and assessment of the main causes of food losses and wastes to identify the best solutions.
- 7.3.3 Promote BMPs to prevent food loss and waste along the AVC, particularly the improvement of post-harvest technology, cold chain, processing and logistics.
- 7.3.4 Increase investment in AVC infrastructure, especially logistic system, live transportation, cold chain system and markets and support the adoption of resource-efficient technologies.
- 7.3.5 Promote effective collaboration by sharing knowledge through “Food Loss and Waste in Fish Value Chains” tools and hubs (Annex 1).



PART C

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

Arrangements for the implementation of the GSA should be in place for Members and related stakeholders, supported with national policy, regulation and investment. Efficient dissemination and implementation of the GSA require mobilization of financial and technical resources, a strong research and innovation approach, effective communication and strong capacity building to support local, national, regional and international initiatives, strategies and plans of action. Relevant initiatives should be implemented by FAO and other global, regional and national agencies in collaboration with technical and financial institutions, NGOs, CSOs and industry representatives.

There is also a need for monitoring, regular evaluation and reporting on their relevance, effectiveness and outcomes, as well as a mechanism to disseminate feedback to stakeholders.

FAO plays a role in providing technical support in data collection, assessment methodologies, and knowledge sharing for a better understanding and documentation of the true contribution to the development of sustainable aquaculture. FAO reporting mechanisms can facilitate wider experience sharing and dissemination of these outcomes.

8. MECHANISMS AND SERVICES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development of aquaculture requires the provision of key services such as extension, training, laboratory analyses, communication and information on markets, practices and technology, funding and financing, research and innovations. Access to modern technological tools and digitalization can improve significantly productivity, practices and supply of inputs. The promotion of PPPs and networking between institutions and industry organizations to develop national and regional research and training capacity in aquaculture can significantly facilitate the transfer of experiences, technology, skills and know-how.

8.1 Funding and financing

Sustainable aquaculture growth requires funding to, among other things, put in place an enabling governance environment, infrastructure, research and innovation systems, proper planning, human capital, including skills/know-how, and human capacity to support the function and growth of the sector. Funding for aquaculture development is not always readily available and necessarily involves different sources and mechanisms.

States should:

- 8.1.1 Facilitate and enhance comprehensive and adequate long-term public and private funding and investment in aquaculture to increase productivity and production in an environmentally and socially sustainable way, with significant impact on economic development, food security and poverty eradication.
- 8.1.2 Develop investment policies and strategies that attract investors and prompt financial institutions to fund the sector. The strategies should target infrastructure, new technologies, capacity development including training, research and innovation to fully unlock the potential of sustainable aquaculture and support food and nutrition security, poverty eradication, employment, ecosystems protection and restoration and biodiversity conservation, adaptation to and mitigation of the impacts of climate change. These strategies should build on successful experiences in aquaculture and in areas such as agriculture or fisheries.
- 8.1.3 Establish aquaculture funding and investment rules and processes that are transparent, verifiable, allowing for accountability of investors and other stakeholders, within a proper business, legal, and regulatory environment. These rules and processes should recognize the rights of access to land, water and natural resources, whether statutory or customary, owned by individuals or communities. They should also ensure that investors and other stakeholders respect the rule of law, reflect the industry BMPs, and their investments are economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable.
- 8.1.4 Explore and communicate to the public new opportunities for inclusive aquaculture financing. These opportunities may include agricultural investment funds, investment promotion, guarantee funds and provision of information and communications technology (ICT), blended financing and philanthropic funding, to increase the level of financing while lowering the risks to investors.
- 8.1.5 Provide financial investment support to farmers who are normally unable to access financing from financial institutions and organize, facilitate and provide funds and loans that support the implementation of BMPs.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 8.1.6 Promote domestic and foreign investment, funding and insurance schemes that offer significant potential and opportunities to complement national public resources and allow for a better access to capital, technology, skills and markets and to help farmers and other investors along the value chain mitigate risks and expand their activities.
- 8.1.7 Assess funding and investments in aquaculture for their social and environmental impacts and certify that they strengthen and not jeopardize food security through adverse effects on any of its aspects including availability, access, utilization or stability of food supply.

8.2 Research and innovation

Investing in research and innovation is essential for sustainable aquaculture. It enables the development of new technologies and practices that can improve the sector's economic, environmental, and social performance. Incorporating the knowledge and sustainable practices of Indigenous Peoples and family farmers is crucial to ensuring contextually appropriate development. By prioritizing research and innovation, stakeholders can address the challenges facing the sector, including improving efficiency, reducing environmental impacts, and ensuring long-term sustainability. It is essential to invest in these areas to ensure the continued growth and development of sustainable aquaculture.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 8.2.1 Invest in aquaculture research and innovation to improve its economic, environmental, and social performance throughout the value chain. This investment should prioritize sustainable development and aim for long-term improvements.
- 8.2.2 Develop and implement innovative technologies that can make aquaculture systems more precise, smart, environmentally performant, and climate resilient. These technologies should be adapted to the local context and resources available.
- 8.2.3 Establish participatory and consultative processes to identify research and development priorities for aquaculture. This should target new technologies and innovations to unlock the full potential of aquaculture while recognizing the importance of traditional knowledge, culture, and practices, particularly of aquaculture-dependent communities. Public-private partnerships should be strengthened to improve efficiency, reduce the environmental footprint, enhance environmental services, and improve economic viability.
- 8.2.4 Strengthen partnerships by establishing and maintaining centers of excellence on aquaculture across the industry, academia, state and non-state actors. This will stimulate demand-led and relevant research and innovation. Public-private partnerships and investments should be encouraged to achieve this goal.

8.3 Communication

Effective communication is vital for enhancing positive public perception and building consensus among stakeholders on the direction of aquaculture development. The sector's credibility depends on its ability to communicate its current and potential role in sustainable development. Prioritizing communication efforts can increase awareness of the benefits and challenges of aquaculture development through various channels, including workshops and media campaigns. Engagement of all stakeholders, including local communities and Indigenous Peoples, will build consensus and ensure sustainable development of the aquaculture sector.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 8.3.1 Develop information sharing and communication tools accessible to all stakeholders and the general public to contest misinformation and enable informed decision-making.
- 8.3.2 Create innovative communication strategies that increase transparency, credibility, and social acceptability of the industry. These strategies should aim to inform and educate the public on the importance of aquaculture for sustainable development.
- 8.3.3 Promote participatory experience sharing, engagement of stakeholders, and reliable data collection, creation, dissemination, and use of knowledge to improve communication and collaboration between stakeholders.
- 8.3.4 Establish open and transparent aquaculture information systems and improve data collection and analysis, including sex-disaggregated data and statistics, to accurately report the progress and contribution of the sector to sustainable development objectives.

8.4 Capacity development

Effective capacity development of individuals and organizations is essential for addressing the specific needs of communities, and it should be carried out by local actors to the extent possible in accordance with national context and priorities. The development of capacity will prepare the future workforce for aquaculture development by developing competencies with strong technical aquaculture skills enhanced with and adapted to the new world of information technology and artificial intelligence. It must be anchored in national systems and local expertise to ensure its sustainability.

Collaborating with national, regional, and international partners is crucial for the success of capacity development efforts. Long-term participatory interventions are necessary for sustainable capacity development and may include diverse elements such as governance, extension, education, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, financing, logistics, safety and

quality control. Partnerships and sustained efforts can build the capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions to drive progress towards the collective goal of sustainable development.

States should:

- 8.4.1 Develop and implement national policy and strategy on capacity building in sustainable aquaculture, from an organizational or institutional perspective, to ensure that the necessary skills and knowledge are in place to drive sustainable development in the aquaculture sector.
- 8.4.2 Enhance capacity of aquaculture stakeholders at all levels, especially small-scale farmers, to enable their participation in decision-making processes and implementation of BMPs.
- 8.4.3 Provide dedicated capacity development opportunities including formal and non-formal education, such as Farmer Field Schools, women's networks and similar mechanisms to enable women, youth, and vulnerable and marginalized groups to benefit equitably.
- 8.4.4 Support investment in capacity development, innovation and extension services, exchange of innovation and know-how, and provide and transfer demand-driven information, technologies, training and practices, solutions, and other innovations to farmers, using appropriate formats and local languages.
- 8.4.5 Implement capacity development programmes and modernization, as appropriate, supporting innovative approaches, digital technologies, and education and extension activities, and concurrently invest in upstream and downstream business to unlock private funding and employment opportunities along the AVC.
- 8.4.6 Ensure that extension services equitably reach all stakeholders, including women, youth, small-scale producers, and vulnerable and marginalized groups, providing training on aquaculture socioeconomics, building skills, and entrepreneurship capacities to enhance their ability to avail themselves of new opportunities and markets. By doing so, they will help to empower all stakeholders and promote inclusivity in the sector.
- 8.4.7 Promote interventions to improve access to credit such as improving financial literacy and management skills to facilitate access to finance.
- 8.4.8 Encourage North-South and South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms, promoting cooperation and collaboration in the sector, driving progress and fostering innovation.

9. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Effective implementation of the GSA requires action by both Member States and stakeholder agencies including FAO. It is also important that responsible authorities are identified, and mechanisms are established to identify and implement key actions.

States should:

- 9.1 Designate a competent authority or task force as necessary for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the GSA to the relevant authority.
- 9.2 Identify implementation competent authorities and partners, including specialized agencies of the United Nations, and regional organizations to support their efforts to implement the GSA.
- 9.3 Enhance technical cooperation, financial assistance, institutional capacity development, knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences, assistance in developing national policies for sustainable aquaculture mutually agreed upon and voluntary transfer of know-how, innovation and technology, and international cooperation mechanism, such as South-South and triangular cooperation.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 9.4 Create awareness of the GSA by disseminating simplified and translated versions and related policy briefs and BMPs.
- 9.5 Provide financial and technical support in implementing the GSA in accordance with national priorities and circumstances.

FAO should:

- 9.6 Encourage COFI and COFI:AQ to guide and support the development of donor funded initiatives to implement the GSA as a component of the FAO Blue Transformation roadmap and review its progress at its regular Sessions.
- 9.7 Support the development and implementation of local, national, regional and international strategies and plans of action to support the implementation of the GSA, in collaboration with technical and financial institutions, NGOs, CSOs and industry representatives.

10. MONITORING, DATA COLLECTING, DATA ANALYSING AND REPORTING

Monitoring and reporting on the status of sustainable aquaculture is critical to the implementation of the GSA and to identify potential emerging problems. Monitoring should include data collection and analysis on aquaculture development, aquaculture performance and the impact of aquaculture on the environment, economies, community and societies at national, regional and global levels. There is a need to establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the GSA, such as work plans, progress reviews, analytic tools and indicator development, application and reporting.

Regular monitoring and reporting processes rely on Members' support and participation. FAO may facilitate monitoring and reporting on the impact of the GSA upon the request of Members.

States and relevant stakeholders should:

- 10.1 Facilitate the use of national-level platforms, with cross-sectoral representation, to oversee the implementation of the GSA, as appropriate.
- 10.2 Enhance the coordination of data collection to support decision-making on sustainable aquaculture management, monitoring and reporting, and feed back into policy formulation and implementation. Data disaggregation, for example by gender and for other specific data needs, can be instrumental in targeting interventions of aquaculture expansion to specific groups, leaving no one behind.
- 10.3 Build on the GSA to elaborate participatory assessment methodologies, including legitimate representatives of aquaculture farmers and dependent communities and stakeholders who should be involved in data collection, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the GSA.

FAO should:

- 10.4 Support the updated data collection methodology, analysis framework, and mechanism of reporting, as well as feedback to Members.
- 10.5 Adapt the CCRF Aquaculture Questionnaire, with input from Members, to monitor, evaluate and report on the development of sustainable aquaculture according to the GSA.
- 10.6 Include a GSA implementation monitoring report to COFI and COFI:AQ, effectively integrated into Members' progress reporting on implementation of aquaculture activities under the CCRF, the COFI Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, and the Blue Transformation roadmap.

- 10.7 Support knowledge sharing and capacity building in data collection, analysis and reporting, as well as indicator development.
- 10.8 Conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the GSA and update them, as appropriate, six years after their adoption by COFI. FAO should call for proposals from Members to update the GSA, focused on advances in science and technology, lessons learned from implementation of the GSA, and the development of BMPs that advance sustainable aquaculture.

GLOSSARY

Area management plan: a plan for the management for a defined area for aquaculture where the farmers undertake aquaculture in accordance with agreed strategies, management practices, and codes of conduct, and manage production in order to reduce and manage risk posed by disease and parasites, including cumulative environmental impacts and social conflict.

Aquaculture legal framework: for the purposes of these Guidelines, refers to the framework of laws within which aquaculture takes place and applies to aquaculture or regulates matters or activities that impact on aquaculture planning, development, management and operations including aquaculture-specific legislation and other laws such as land and water tenure legislation, spatial planning legislation, environmental legislation, animal and plant health and production legislation, food safety and quality legislation and biosafety legislation.

Aquaculture-specific laws: for the purposes of these Guidelines, refers to laws, including legislation, which clearly express that they apply to or regulate aquaculture planning, development, management and operations.

Better management practices (BMPs): management practices aimed at improving the quantity, safety and quality of products considering animal health and welfare, food safety, environmental and socio-economic sustainability. BMPs implementation is generally voluntary. The term “better” is preferred rather than “best” because aquaculture practices are continuously improving (today’s “best” is tomorrow’s “norm”) (FAO, 2011a).

Climate-smart approaches in fisheries and aquaculture: address three key objectives, namely sustainable food systems, adaptation and mitigation. In particular, the first objective is connected to the overarching goal of achieving sustainable food systems, which encompasses the environmental, social and economic aspects of fisheries and aquaculture. The second objective focuses on the need for adaptation to climate change, including climate-induced extreme events and disasters, by reducing the sector’s vulnerability and increasing its resilience. The third objective is to enable the sector, where possible, to contribute to the mitigation of GHG emissions (FAO, 2021a).

Commercial/industrial aquafeed: aquafeed comprised of ingredients mixed in various proportions to complement one another to form a nutritionally complete compound diet. Such feeds are manufactured in industrial feed milling plants and are distributed and sold using conventional market chains. Commercial aquafeeds are commonly produced in different forms: compressed sinking pellet, extruded floating pellet or crumble, and extruded soft pellet (FAO, 2011b).

Culture-based fishery: a fishery in which the use of aquaculture facilities is involved in the production of at least part of the life cycle of a conventionally fished resource. Aquaculture is usually the initial hatchery phase that produces larvae or juveniles for release into natural or modified habitats (FAO, 2015).

Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA): strategy for the integration of the activity within the wider ecosystem such that it promotes sustainable development, equity, and resilience of interlinked social-ecological systems (FAO, 2010a).

Ecosystem services: the conditions and processes through which natural ecosystems, and the species that make them up, sustain and fulfil human life. Examples include the provision of clean water and food (fishery resources), maintenance of liveable climates (carbon sequestration), pollination of crops and native vegetation, and fulfilment of people's cultural, spiritual, and intellectual needs (FAO, 2009).

Environmental carrying capacity: the magnitude of aquaculture production that can be supported without changes in ecological processes, species richness and populations and communities. It is assessed against variables including inputs of aquaculture wastes, deterioration of habitats, eutrophication, biodiversity and escapes and their environmental interactions.

Environmental impact assessment (EIA): the evaluation of the possible impacts to the environment of any proposed project or development plan. EIA considers both the beneficial and adverse effects to inter-related socioeconomic, cultural and human-health impacts (FAO, 2021b).

Farmed Type: Farmed aquatic organisms that could be a strain, hybrid, triploid, monosex group, other genetically altered form, variety or wild type (FAO, 2019a).

Feed(s): edible materials(s) that are consumed by animals and contribute energy and/or nutrients to their diet (FAO, 2011c).

Feed additives: chemicals, other than nutrients, that are required by fish and that are approved for addition to their feed. Also defined as an ingredient or combination of ingredients added to the basic feed mix or parts thereof to fulfil a specific need. Usually used in micro quantities and requiring careful handling and mixing (FAO, 2011d).

Gender: refers not to male and female, but to masculine and feminine - that is, to qualities or characteristics that society ascribes to each sex. People are born female or male but learn to correspond to those societal expectations. Perceptions of gender are deeply rooted, vary widely both within and between cultures, and change over time. But in all cultures, gender determines power and resources for females and males (FAO, 2017a).

Gender equality: when women and men enjoy equal rights, opportunities and entitlements in civil and political life, in terms of access, control, participation and treatment (FAO, 2017b).

Gender equity: fairness and impartiality in the treatment of women and men in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. At times, special treatment/affirmative action/positive discrimination is required (FAO, 2017c).

Gender mainstreaming: the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality and equity (FAO, 2017d).

Integrated agriculture-aquaculture system: the concurrent or sequential linkage between agriculture and aquaculture occurring on-site, or indirectly through off-site needs and opportunities, or both. Benefits of integration are synergistic rather than additive; and different components of the system may benefit to varying degrees (adapted from FAO, 2003). Integrated agriculture aquaculture has also been described as semi-intensive aquaculture systems in synergy with agriculture (including animal husbandry) (FAO, ICLARM & IIRR, 2001).

Landscape/seascape approach: a holistic, collaborative, and tangible solution to biodiversity conservation and sustainability challenges. A landscape/seascape approach includes measures to protect and add value to the biological and cultural diversity of whole territories and seascapes; landscape and seascape approaches are effective for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (IUCN).

Stakeholder(s): any individual, group or organization who has an interest in (or a "stake"), or who can affect or is affected, positively or negatively, by a process or management decision (FAO, 2021c).

Social carrying capacity: the amount of aquaculture that can be developed without adverse social impacts, including what is acceptable in the community. It is assessed against variables including conflicts over use of water and land, employment, livelihoods, acceptability by communities, value to communities and practices (FAO, 2010b).

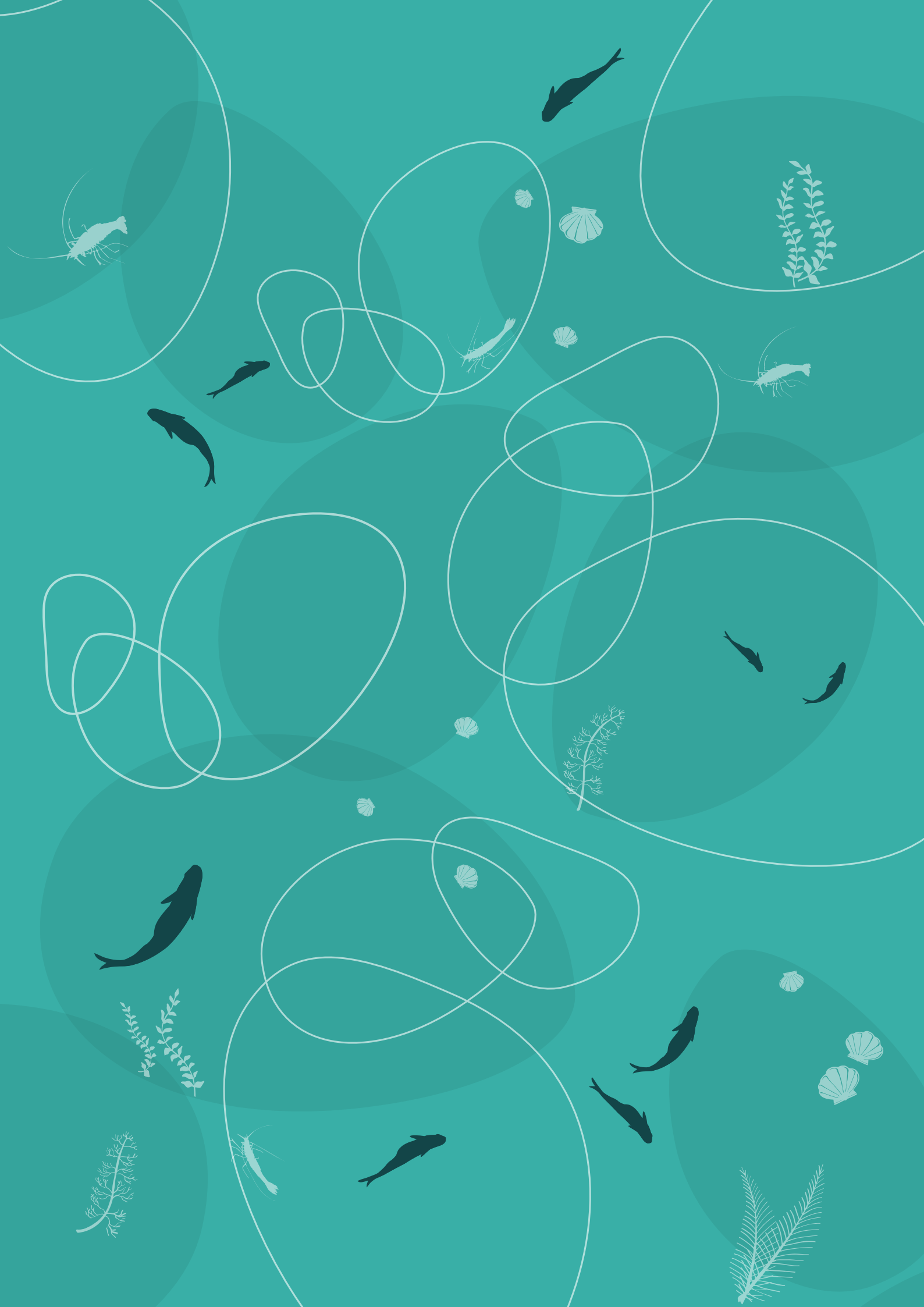
Veterinary medicines: any substance or combination of substances presented for treating or preventing disease in animals or which may be administered to animals to restore health, and correct or modify physiological functions in animals (FAO, 2019b).

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ANNEX 1

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FAO. 2014. <i>Developing sustainable food value chains, Guiding principles</i> . Rome. https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i3953e	Section 7.1
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FAO. 2016. <i>Developing gender-sensitive value chains – A guiding framework</i> . Rome, Italy. https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i6462en	Section 7.1
FAO. 2016. <i>The FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2016–2020, Supporting the food and agriculture sectors in implementing the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance to minimize the impact of antimicrobial resistance</i> . https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i5996e	Section 5.5
FAO. 2021. <i>2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture</i> . Rome, Italy. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb3767en	Section 10
FAO. 2021. <i>The FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021–2025</i> . Rome, Italy. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5545en	Section 5.5
FAO. 2022. <i>Blue Transformation Roadmap 2022-2030: A vision for FAO's work on aquatic food systems</i> . Rome, Italy. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0459en	Preface and sections 9 and 10
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The Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA) were developed and adopted by FAO and its Members through a participatory consultative process spanning eight years. They offer a comprehensive framework to implement the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, in line with the FAO Blue Transformation vision and the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The GSA provide normative guidance to develop and implement policies, legal frameworks and strategies to promote socially, economically and environmentally responsible aquaculture, with a focus on empowering small-scale farmers, women and youth and the conservation and sustainable management of aquatic resources and ecosystems. They consist of a set of shared and agreed principles and practices that all countries and stakeholders can use to guide their aquaculture sectors to ensure food security and nutrition, equitable livelihoods, One Health and animal welfare, an ecosystem approach, and climate resilience for current and future generations.

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