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Guidelines for environmentally acceptable coastal aquaculture

Aquaculture Department, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center

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Guidelines for environmentally acceptable coastal aquaculture

The ecological and socioeconomic benefits and costs of aquaculture are potentially so significant that action-oriented policies are necessary. In order to ensure that financial gain is not at the expense of the ecosystem or the rest of society, aquaculture developments must follow established principles.

General principles

- Coastal aquaculture has the potential to produce food and to generate income contributing to social and economic well-being.
- Planned and properly managed aquaculture development is a productive use of the coastal zone if undertaken within the broader framework of integrated coastal zone management according to national goals for sustainable development and in harmony with international obligations.
- The likely effects of coastal aquaculture on the social and ecological environments must be predicted and evaluated, and measures formulated to contain them within acceptable, pre-determined limits.
- Coastal aquaculture must be regulated and monitored to ensure that impacts remain within pre-determined limits and to signal when intervention is necessary.

Strategies and objectives

- Sound use of the coastal zone to produce aquatic products and generate income.
- Development of policy and management techniques to reduce conflict with other coastal activities.
- Prevention or reduction of adverse impacts of coastal aquaculture on the environment.
- Management and control of aquaculture to ensure that the impacts remain within acceptable limits.
- Reduction of health risks from the consumption of aquaculture products.

These strategies allow equitable balance between those seeking a simple livelihood, those wanting to make a profit, the quality of the environment, and the interests of the local people and the wider community.

Action plans

- Formulate coastal aquaculture development and management plans.
- Formulate integrated coastal management plans.
- Apply the environmental impact assessment process to all major aquaculture proposals.
- Select suitable sites for coastal aquaculture.
- Improve the management of aquaculture operations.
- Assess the capacity of the ecosystem to sustain aquaculture development.
- Establish guidelines for the use of mangrove wetlands for aquaculture.
- Establish guidelines for the use of bioactive compounds in aquaculture.
- Assess and evaluate the true effects of transfers and introductions of exotic organisms.
- Regulate discharges from land-based aquaculture through the enforcement of effluent standards.
- Establish quality control measures for aquaculture products.
- Increase public awareness of the safety aspects of consuming seafood.
- Apply incentives and deterrents to reduce environmental degradation from aquaculture activities.
- Monitor ecological change.

Source: *Reducing Environmental Impacts of Coastal Aquaculture* Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Pollution (GESAMP). **Reports and Studies No. 47**, FAO, 1991.