



**Convention of March 15 2007, between the members  
of the Responsible Fishing Alliance (R.F.A.)**

*An alliance for a responsible fishing policy– [www.responsible-fishing.org](http://www.responsible-fishing.org)*

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## **TITLE 1: DENOMINATION AND LOCATION, OBJECTIVE AND PRINCIPLES**

### **Item 1. Denomination and Location**

I. Nearly three quarters of the most important wild fish stocks around the world are exploited at their maximum level, over-exploited or threatened today by over-exploitation<sup>1</sup>. In certain areas, continuation of the policies and fishing practices of the last few decades is neither *responsible* nor *sustainable*, from environmental, social or economic points of view. Because of this reality, it is highest priority to build synergies between actors of the fishing sector around the world. That is the reason why, at an international level, civil society organizations, private companies and public institutions have decided to unite their efforts in order to reverse this trend and to create an action group to promote responsible fishing; a group named the **RFA — Responsible Fishing Alliance**.

II. The Alliance is currently located at 38, rue Saint Sabin, 75011 Paris, France. Thee head office can be transferred by consensual decision of the members of the Alliance to any place defined at Title II, item 2, paragraph 2.

### **Item 2. Objective and principles**

I. The **objective** of this international alliance is the **sustainable development of wild-fish fisheries and fisheries from alternative fish farming**. In order to guarantee this sustainability, several aspects of the fishing must be considered:

- **The environmental aspect:** long-term management of wild-fish resources, protection of ecosystems,
- **The social and economic aspects:** decent working conditions and incomes for the actors of the fishing sector, defense of cultural specificities (especially for small-scale fishing),
- **Food security and food safety** for consumers (developing and developed countries).

II. The Alliance is established on the following principles:

1. **Action:** To defend by all legal means the interests of the actors of the fishing sector – especially the social, economic and cultural specificities of small-scale fishing; to protect the natural resources and the environment.
2. **Share and support:** To share information with its members; to develop dialogues with professionals; to train and support the actors for the sustainable development projects in the field; to put the know-how of the Alliance in service of creating value and shared equity throughout the fish chain.
3. **Legitimacy:** To legitimate the Alliance with international, national, and local authorities, likewise with the media and professional authorities; to be recognized as a privileged interlocutor and contribute to the improvement of the regulations and professional practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2004.

4. **Communication:** To communicate with all the economic actors, in particular the consumers, both individuals and groups holding specific values.
5. **Objectivity and constructivism:** To define common strategies based on reports, studies, and analyses.

## **TITLE 2: NATURE OF THE ALLIANCE, COMPOSITION, ADMISSION, DEMISSION AND EXCLUSION**

### **Item 1. Nature**

- I. The Alliance does not have a legal identity. Its existence and its operation under private signature are governed by the present Convention;
- II. The principles of the Alliance are based on transparency and scientific proof, without influence from political parties, trade unions, employers' organization or philosophical/religious affiliation;
- III. It engages in these matters through the concerns of responsible citizen and in accordance with the laws. This Convention is guarantor of the correct operation of the Alliance;
- IV. In the Alliance, each organization represents one vote.

### **Item 2. Composition**

- I. The R.F.A. emanates from a collective will. It carries by approval of the convention between its members the defence of a common interest: to promote the means and techniques of responsible fishing and aquaculture and sustainable management of the economic, social and environmental aspects of the fisheries;
- II. The Alliance is opened to any organization belonging to the fish chain and/or involved directly into the support of stakeholders of the fish chain (especially fishers' organizations, fishers' support organizations in the field, fish processors, fish distributors, and consumers associations);
- III. The Alliance is open to any organization functioning under legal statutes. The generic term of "organization" means entities of private or public law — companies with commercial statutes, public or para-public organizations, associations, co-operatives, collectives under private signature — the activities of which legitimately relate to living natural resources in general and/or fisheries resources and their products in particular.;
- IV. Any organization answering the criteria detailed at paragraphs II and III, and sharing the values stated in the Charter of the R.F.A. can gain admission in Alliance; Individuals cannot be invited for membership of the R.F.A.;
- V. Apart from specific missions requiring appropriate financial means (cf. Title 3, item 5, paragraph II), members of the Alliance participate on voluntary, benevolent and disinterested basis to the achievement of the objectives of the Alliance;
- VI. All the members who signed the present Convention at the initial establishment meeting receive the title of « founding members ».

### **Item 3. Admission**

- I. Any application to join the Alliance must be transmitted on written form to the Coordinator of the Alliance;
- II. Upon admission to the Alliance, the candidate organization must provide all information and documents corresponding to the criteria in Title 1, item I, as well as detailed information as regards the organization: activity, status and membership;
- III. The Coordinating Committee (Title 3, item 1, paragraph V) studies, within a period of three (3) months the application for admission, and presents its decision at the next meeting of the Council of the Alliance (Title 3, item 1, paragraph I). The acceptance or refusal of the admission is notified in written form at the end of the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the Coordinator of the Alliance (Title 3, item 1, paragraph II) addresses, in written form, the decision of the Council of the Alliance to the candidate organization;
- IV. Admission to the Alliance is by vote of a two-thirds majority of organization members, based on a principle of equalized representation of organizations (one vote per organization) ;
- V. Any member has to fill the present convention for final admission. NB: no special fees are required.

### **Item 4. Demission and exclusion**

- I. Any organization can leave the Alliance at any time, without notice or justification. However, the decision of leaving must be notified on written form to the Coordinator or the Alliance;
- II. An organization may be expelled from the Alliance without notice or justification, and without possible legal recourse, by a vote of two-thirds of the organizations members, based on a principle of equalized representation of organizations (one vote per organization);

## **TITLE 3: ORGANIZATION, PRINCIPLES AND RULES OF WORKING**

### **Item 1. Organization**

- I. Council of the Alliance. The assembly of all member organizations constitutes an entity, called the Council of the Alliance (one vote per organization). In order to participate in decision-making processes of the Alliance, as well as to control the good implementation and follow-up of the decisions taken, a representative and an alternate are named by each member organization. For each meeting, the Council of the Alliance designates from among its members a session chairman and a session reporter;  
NB: the list of all member organizations is attached in the annex.
- II. Coordinator. The Council of the Alliance designates by majority vote a coordinator and his substitute. Their function is to ensure the cohesion of the Council and the general representation of Alliance;
- III. Human resources. The Council of the Alliance indicates by vote the members volunteers to participate to the pilot projects of the Alliance, indicated under the term HR (human resources);
- IV. Responsibility for pilot projects. Among HR (cf. paragraph III), the Council of the Alliance indicates by simple majority vote, volunteers to be responsible for the pilot projects of the Alliance. People responsible for pilot projects may belong to the Council of the Alliance (cf. paragraph I) and/or to any

member organizations of the Alliance. People responsible for pilot projects are in charge of the follow-up of their pilot project(s), the coordination of the respective HR, as well as the report to the Coordinating Committee (cf. paragraph V). People responsible for pilot projects are elected for a period of 1 year, tacitly renewable;

V. Coordinating Committee. The assembly of all responsible for pilot projects constitutes an entity under the responsibility of the Coordinator, called the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee is in charge of reporting to the Council of the Alliance about the implementation and the follow-up of pilot projects;

VI. Honorary Committee. Only organizations defined at Title 2, item 2, paragraph II can become members of the Alliance. However, in order to achieve the goals of the Alliance, it is from prior importance for the R.F.A. to cooperate with other external entities such as Scientific and Research Organizations, Universities, and Consulting companies. That is the reason why these organizations –or their individuals- are invited to join a permanent “Honorary Committee” that aims to assist the Alliance in its decision-making processes. Designation and mandate of the Honorary Committee is under the responsibility of the Council of the Alliance, or by delegation the Coordinator. The Honorary Committee can elect a President and a Vice-président for its internal working;

VII. Multidisciplinary advisory group. Beside the Honorary Committee, the Council of the Alliance or the Coordinating Committee, by simple majority vote, or by delegation the Coordinator can designate voluntary or remunerated experts to entrust specific missions or to get appropriate advices (professional meetings, conferences, forum, working group, studies technical, legal, participation to pilot projects, etc), during a limited period. These experts can belong to a member organization of the Alliance, to the Honorary committee or to any other external organization. The duration of the solicitation of these experts may vary and depends on the specified mission(s).

## **Item 2. Working principles**

I. No organization can be committed in the name of the Alliance without of having received a notice beforehand from the Committee of the Alliance or the Coordinator;

II. Solidarity between the members is the rule, except in the case of legitimate contrary interests justified on written form;

III. Each member organization preserves its identity, autonomy of thought and action, and its freedom as a separate entity;

IV. The Alliance works in association with the Sustainable Food Laboratory, but can seek any other support at the international level and can become member of any network working in the same field.

## **Item 3. Decision-making rules**

I. The RFA does not have procedural rules. The principal rule of operations is consensus. However, when a decision cannot be taken by consensus the vote may be used in the terms defined at Title II, items 3 and 4, and Title III, item 1;

II. As far as voting is concerned, each organization represents one vote, with none casting a deciding vote in the event of equal division of votes. Decisions are taken at simple majority, except specific cases detailed at Title II, items 3 and 4;

III. The Council determines, in annual meetings, the main themes of the Alliance: strategy, topics of reflection and action, means of supporting these actions, distributions of the roles and the responsibilities. These decisions determine the Alliance primary lines of work;

IV. Important strategic decisions may require an extraordinary meeting of the Council of the Alliance at any moment;

V. All decision taken on behalf of the Alliance must necessarily be reported to the Council of the Alliance.

#### **Item 4. Working rules**

I. Each member organization must be equipped with appropriate means so as to achieve an efficient communication with other members. An email list will be created in order to promote communication and daily decision-making at the level of the Council of the Alliance and at the level of the Coordinating Committee;

II. Day-to-day decision-making rules are based on the principle of consensus and the presumed agreement:

1°) The text of documents and their conclusions are subject to consultation of the Council of the Alliance members, unless they are outside the work of the Council of the Alliance,

2°) The text of documents and their conclusions are subject to consultation of the members of the Coordinating Committee, unless they are outside the work of the Coordinating Committee,

3°) Except at specified times, the decisions (agreement, rejection, modifications, remarks, amendments) must be given within 5 working day. Failing this, agreement is presumed,

4°) Any decision and action on behalf of Alliance will be the subject of a report to the Council of the Alliance.

III. In order to exercise its mission, the Coordinating Committee or failing this the Coordinator can call upon voluntary or remunerated external experts (cf. Title 3, item 1, paragraph VI). A multidisciplinary advisory group will be permanently established and will gather these external experts. The choice of these experts will be done with respect to their competences and fields of expertise, paying attention to avoid any conflicts of interests.

#### **Item 5. Financial resources**

I. In order to achieve its objectives, the Alliance may need to mobilize resources from different natures, internally or externally. However, financial resources must be compatible with the ethic and the deontology of the Alliance;

II. The utilization of resources is subjected to a project with clearly identified beneficiaries. *Ad hoc* financial reports and audits must be led in this sense. Each member organization is called to financially contribute to the general expenses of Coordinating Committee on a voluntary basis;

III. Each member organization covers the expenses incurred by the activity of its representatives within the framework of the Council of the Alliance;

IV. Clearly identified people may receive a specific financial support from the Alliance when they can justify a true commitment in the projects of the Alliance (Coordinator, human resources, etc.).

**Item 6. Diffusion of information**

I - Information is shared primarily by electronic mail and through group lists;

II- Information entering a group list will be subject to the authorization of the Coordinator before being repeated publicly;

III - The information transmitted by the representatives and the members of Alliance will be non modifiable (electronic mail, photocopy, formats jpg, pdf...);

IV - The Coordinating Committee will take all means to promote the Alliance and ensure diffusion of the ideas arising from the work of its members, in particular the creation of an Internet site, a public discussion list, conferences and press reports, participation in television broadcasts...

Composed in Brussels, on March 15 2007.

Signed in \_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_\_ 2007 :

Organizational member:

Name and signature of organizational representative:  
« Read and approved »