

GRÓ-FTP 6-Month Programme

Programme year mid-November 2023 – mid-May 2024

Introduction to GRÓ-FTP

The Fisheries Training Programme (FTP) was established in 1998 through a trilateral agreement between the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Marine Research Institute of Iceland, and the United Nations University as part of Iceland's development cooperation efforts. The Programme ran as the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme (UNU-FTP) from 1998 through 2019, before becoming part of the GRÓ Centre under the auspices of UNESCO in January 2020.

The mission of the GRÓ Fisheries Training Programme is to strengthen institutional capacity to support the sustainable use of living aquatic resources in developing countries through international educational and research cooperation.

Ultimately, the FTP's aim is to assist partner countries in achieving their own development goals related to fisheries. To achieve this, partnerships are formed with institutions, agencies, and organizations in partner countries which are important in developing, supporting, and implementing fisheries policies. Based on the capacity gaps identified in close consultation with our partners, the FTP creates content and training programmes to address the needs in each country and organisation.

While considering the importance of cultural diversity and gender equality, the activities of the programme have a special focus on Africa and Small Island Development States (SIDS) where fisheries play an important role in local economies and culture. The FTP primarily partners with countries which qualify for ODA assistance in accordance with the OECD DAC classification.

The FTP applies an approach based on the principles of Education for Sustainable Development. FTP builds on the knowledge and expertise of different experts by liaising with a wide range of Icelandic and international institutions and organisations.

6-Month Course Description

The core activity of the FTP is an annual postgraduate level six-month training programme in Iceland which aims to strengthen the professional capacity and competency of FTP Fellows to actively contribute to work done in their organisations and to recognise development potential in their home countries. Each year the course runs for six months and comprises three modules: an introductory part, a specialisation part, and an individual research project. Successful graduates receive a UNESCO GRÓ certificate of completion.

Introductory course

The introductory part occupies the first five weeks of the programme and gives Fellows a holistic view of fisheries, providing them with insights into various disciplines within fisheries and their connectedness. In this course, Fellows receive a comprehensive overview of fisheries in an international context, sharpening their understanding of fisheries in their home countries and what is needed for a fisheries sector to evolve. The introduction consists of a series of lectures, site visits and assignments, touching upon the subject of personal and professional growth, and group dynamics. The

FTP places emphasis on environmental conservation and gender equality which are integral to sustainable fisheries and the development of the fisheries sector.

Specialist course

On completion of the introductory part, each Fellow joins a specialist line according to their area of expertise and responsibilities at home. The lines focus on one specific area of fisheries and aims to hone each Fellow's knowledge and experience throughout a six-week programme of lectures, assignments, and site visits. During this time, Fellows develop ideas for a final project in collaboration with their supervisors communicated through a project proposal submitted orally and in writing.

The FTP offers training in four areas of specialisation:

- Fisheries Policy and Management (University of Akureyri in the north of Iceland)
- Aquatic Resource Assessment and Monitoring (Marine and Freshwater Research Institute in Hafnarfjörður, near Reykjavík)
- Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing (Matís, Food Science and Biotechnology Institute in Reykjavík)
- Sustainable Aquaculture (University of Hólar, north-west Iceland)

Project work

The programme culminates in a twelve-week individual project in which fellows work closely with a supervisor to conduct research on a pressing issue related to their work at home. The project work combines the Fellow's experience and practical skills gained in the introductory and specialist training, along with their personal goals on an individual research topic. Project design skills are applied to develop and present a research proposal, and then research is conducted individually through close collaboration with an expert supervisor. Final projects most often involve data directly from Fellows' home countries. On completion, a research paper is submitted and published on the GRÓ-FTP website. In addition, Fellows are required to design an information poster summarising their research and present their results in an open dissemination meeting.

Assessment

As an individualised training programme, the FTP does not employ standard examinations as part of its assessment regime for the fellows. Fellows are working, mid-career professionals, and not traditional students. We anticipate that fellows attend the 6-month course from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds, and as such, assessment methods focus on individual growth of each fellow, rather than a common metric of evaluation. Through our assessment strategies we aim to support the progress of each individual fellow.

With the aim of personalised and individual growth, there are several methods for assessment of fellows throughout the 6-month course. In the introductory course, fellows receive feedback from FTP staff on written work and presentations delivered with the assignments. This feedback is provided in several areas, including the technical content of the assignment and presentation, as well as the fellow's presentation style and academic writing.

In addition to the technical assignments, fellows draft professional goals intended to guide their growth over the course of the training programme. Personal interviews between fellows and FTP staff are taken at the end of the introductory part of the course. During these interviews, fellows discuss their professional goals, and begin to articulate potential areas of interest for their final individual research projects.

Assessment in the specialist course is coordinated and conducted by the leaders of each line of the specialisation. Each line includes a series of lectures, site visits, assignments, and practical exercises.

During the specialist course, fellows receive a workshop on project management and proposal writing, delivered by GRÓ-FTP staff, as they begin the process of formulating their own project proposals. At the end of the specialisation course, fellows submit a project proposal and present their ideas to the rest of the group. These proposals are assessed based on several criteria, and should demonstrate the fellow's ability to:

- Adequately describe the situational context for the issue to be addressed.
- Formulate specific goals and objectives for the research
- Describe the methodology the fellow will employ in the project
- Create a budget for any expenses associated with the execution of the project
- Develop a realistic timeline for collecting and analysing data, and for writing the report itself

Over the course of the individual project period, GRÓ-FTP staff hold meetings with both the supervisor and fellow at least two times, and more frequently if extra support is required. The purpose of these meetings is to monitor the progress of the research and provide additional support to both the fellows and the supervisors when required.

The assessment of the research projects is based on several criteria. In general, these projects should demonstrate the fellow's ability to:

- Set the context for the problem the research aims to address
- Synthesise existing knowledge of the topic through a literature review
- Apply selected research methodology
- Critically analyse data and information collected
- Describe results in the context of existing knowledge,
- Interpret what the results mean for the issue in a wider context,
- Clearly communicate how the results from the project can be meaningfully applied to address the issue being researched.

Monitoring

For each module of the 6-month course evaluations are performed which gather important feedback crucial for improving the operation of the training programme. These are described in the module descriptions. At the end of the six-month course, a written evaluation is conducted which is online and anonymous. These written evaluations are followed up with focus groups, held with each line of specialisation.

Selection of Countries, institutional partners, and fellows

Country Selection

The selection of FTP partner countries builds upon an identified and mutually agreed upon need in the country for the type of capacity building offered by the FTP. In addition:

- The country has a policy to develop sustainable, science-based management of fisheries
- The country lacks capacity to sustainably manage its aquatic resources
- It is a country that qualifies for Official Development Assistance, as defined by the OECD DAC

- The country is stable, with institutions receptive and able to apply capacity developed through the FTP

Institution Selection

Depending on a partner country, targeted partners of the FTP in developing countries are governmental agencies, universities, and other organisations that have the mandate to deal with fisheries development issues. These partners include relevant ministries responsible for designing and implementing policies and regulations on fisheries, universities, and research institutions. FTP works with the partners to identify training and research needs and to design and run custom made short courses. The partner organizations also nominate candidates for the six-month training, who are then selected by FTP through a thorough selection process.

Fellow Selection

FTP aims to train key people within partner organisations, who are well-positioned to apply and disseminate their new knowledge and skills after they return home. FTP does not accept applications from individuals. Instead, they apply a selection process which is intended to secure appropriate candidates:

- Candidates must have at least one university degree,
- Candidates must have at least one year's working experience in the field they intend to study
- Candidates must hold a position within their organisation that allows them to apply and disseminate the knowledge and skills gained through the training
- Candidates must demonstrate ability to communicate effectively in English
- Candidates are interviewed by FTP staff members or their representatives.
 - Usually, the interviews take place in the partner country, which in itself is a strategy for strengthening the connections between FTP and the partners and also offers opportunities for informal progress monitoring
 - Candidates are interviewed virtually when physical meeting are not possible

The FTP makes the final selection and selected candidates are invited to attend the training, in cooperation with their organisations. The training is free of charge for the fellows. All expenses directly connected to the training are paid by GRÓ, or in some cases by sponsors. The partner organisations are expected to release them from their day-to-day responsibilities during the training period.

Long term change and impact

Some of the general assumptions behind the work of GRÓ-FTP are:

- In each partner country, there are key local institutions and organisations that have the potential and ambition to contribute to necessary changes in the fisheries. FTP identifies those institutions and chooses to work with them.
- Selected institutions/organisations have a mandate to work on fisheries development issues; to work towards better fisheries science, fisheries policies, improve the fisheries value chains, or improve aquaculture practices.
- To maximize impact, FTP needs to be flexible and adapt over time in selection of partner countries and collaborating partners.

Icelandic partners

GRÓ-FTP is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and hosted within the Icelandic Marine and Freshwater Research Institute. Other partner institutes within Iceland include the University of Iceland, Matís Ltd. - Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D, the University of Akureyri, and Hólar University

College. These effective partnerships offer a broad-based learning and training environment for our fellows by providing access to experts in diverse specialist fields. One of the reasons Iceland was chosen to host the FTP was because of easy accessibility to knowledge from so many expert areas within a highly developed fishing industry due to the unusually close connections between industry, academia, governmental and research institutions within the country.

Additionally, the GRÓ International Centre for Capacity Development, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Societal Change, as well as the other GRÓ programmes on land restoration, geothermal and gender equality, are key partners in Iceland.

UNESCO partners

The primary UNESCO partner for the GRÓ-FTP is the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

UN partners

Within the wider UN system, the work of FTP is closely related to the mandates of the UN FAO, the UNDP, and UNEP.