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FAO’s Blue Transformation and the Four Betters

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In 2022, fish farms produced more seafood than the world’s wild-caught fisheries, for the first time ever. **FAO calls its strategy for this shift “Blue Transformation”. It is a roadmap to feed a growing world from the ocean without emptying it.**



Floating fish cages, a common form of marine aquaculture, the kind of sustainable production growth Blue Transformation targets. Photo: Thomas Bjørkan, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
Roadmap 2022-2030

FAO’s plan for fisheries and aquaculture.

02
35% by 2030

Target growth in sustainable aquaculture.

03
51% in 2022

Aquaculture’s share of aquatic animal output.

04
Four Betters

Production, nutrition, environment, and life.

AquacultureFarming of fish and other aquatic life.
COFIFAO’s Committee on Fisheries.
SOFIAFAO’s flagship report on world fisheries and aquaculture.
PMMSYIndia’s Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for fisheries.

What Blue Transformation Is

Must Know

Definition and origin

- Blue Transformation is **FAO's Roadmap 2022-2030** for aquatic food systems. It guides sustainable growth in fisheries and aquaculture worldwide.
- It grew out of the Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture. All FAO members endorsed it at the 34th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in February 2021.
- FAO formally rolled it out as the Roadmap 2022-2030 at COFI's 35th session in September 2022.
- FAO's 2022 fisheries report, "Towards Blue Transformation", carried the same theme.

Three objectives, the Four Betters, and the 2030 target

- **Aquaculture:** expand and intensify it sustainably, and share the benefits fairly.
- **Fisheries:** manage all fisheries well, keeping stocks healthy and livelihoods secure.
- **Value chains:** upgrade them so they are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.
- FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31 has four goals: **better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life**. Blue Transformation applies the same four.
- The roadmap targets **35% growth** in global sustainable aquaculture production by 2030.

> **Quick check 1.** FAO's Blue Transformation Roadmap targets 35% growth in global sustainable aquaculture production by 2030. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

The Numbers Behind the Shift

Good to Know

SOFIA 2024: key numbers

- In 2022, global aquaculture output reached 94.4 million tonnes of aquatic animals. That was 51% of the world total, and it overtook capture fisheries for the first time.
- Aquaculture supplied about 57% of aquatic animal production destined for human consumption in 2022.
- Fisheries and aquaculture together produced 223.2 million tonnes in 2022. That included 185.4 million tonnes of aquatic animals and 37.8 million tonnes of algae.
- Asia produces 91.4% of the world's farmed aquatic output.

Looking ahead, and one route there

- FAO presented its Blue Transformation priorities at the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France, in June 2025.
- Global seafood production is projected to grow 10% by 2032. It would need to grow 22% by 2050 to meet expected demand.
- Recirculating Aquaculture Systems are one route to that growth. They raise fish on land in reused water. India supports them through PMMSY.

> **Quick check 2.** In 2022, global aquaculture output overtook capture fisheries for the first time, reaching 51% of the world's total aquatic animal production. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Exam Edge

Previous Year Question

One recent UPSC question set its scene at the UN Ocean Conference.

> **Quick check 3.** FAO's "Four Betters" are: better ocean, better coral reefs, better estuaries, and better production. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Reading the Framework Correctly

Great to Know

Not ocean-specific

- The Four Betters apply across all of FAO's work. The same four terms cover crops, livestock, and forestry.
- FAO delivers its Strategic Framework through 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs). They span its full mandate, not just Blue

Transformation.

- India runs its own aquaculture push, the Blue Revolution scheme under PMMSY. It aligns with FAO's vision but is a separate programme.

Think it through: why build a question around that mismatch?

It tests whether you know where a framework comes from. You should not just match a term to the setting where it appears. A question set at an ocean conference primes you to expect ocean words. Options like "better ocean" then feel natural, even though FAO never uses them. The real Four Betters are broad on purpose. They organise FAO's whole Strategic Framework 2022-31. Knowing that lets you cross out the invented options.

Quick check 4. FAO delivers on its Strategic Framework 2022-31 through 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) that span its full mandate. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 5. India's Blue Revolution scheme under PMMSY is the same programme as FAO's Blue Transformation Roadmap. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick Q&A

What is Blue Transformation?

FAO's Roadmap 2022-2030 for fisheries and aquaculture.

What is the 2030 aquaculture target?

35% growth in sustainable production.

What did aquaculture reach in 2022?

94.4 million tonnes, 51% of the total.

What are the Four Betters?

Production, nutrition, environment, and life.

Is India’s Blue Revolution the same programme?

No. It is separate but aligned.

Practice: Blue Transformation

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Practice MCQs

1. At the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) held in June, 2025 in France, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations demonstrated its leading voice on marine and ocean issues, especially on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for resilient livelihood and "Blue Transformation".

Which of the following combinations about the "Four Betters" proposed by FAO for "Blue Transformation" is correct?

A. Better production, better nutrition, better environment and better ocean

B. Better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life

C. Better coral reefs, better nutrition, better environment and better life

D. Better estuaries, better nutrition, better environment and better mangrove vegetation

See answer ↓

2. What is FAO's "Blue Transformation", in essence?

A. A UN fund that compensates fishing communities for climate losses

B. An FAO certification label for sustainably farmed shrimp

C. FAO's Roadmap 2022–2030 for sustainable growth in fisheries and aquaculture

D. A binding international treaty that bans deep-sea trawling worldwide

See answer ↓

3. The concept of Blue Transformation first emerged from which FAO body, and when?

A. The 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), February 2021

B. The World Trade Organization's Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, 2022

C. The Paris Agreement negotiations, 2015

D. The FAO Council's 100th Session, 2015

See answer ↓

4. Per FAO's State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2024 report, which of the following statements about 2022 global production is/are correct?
1. Aquaculture production of aquatic animals was 94.4 million tonnes.
2. Aquaculture surpassed capture fisheries in aquatic animal production for the first time.
3. Total fisheries and aquaculture production (including algae) was over 220 million tonnes.

A. 1 only

B. 1 and 2 only

C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

See answer ↓

5. FAO's Blue Transformation Roadmap targets what percentage growth in global sustainable aquaculture production by 2030?

A. 35%

B. 50%

C. 25%

D. 15%

See answer ↓

6. At which 2025 international gathering did FAO present its Blue Transformation priorities, including the "Four Betters" framework?

A. World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland

B. The UN Ocean Conference (UNOC), Nice, France

C. COP30, Belém, Brazil

D. The G20 Summit, Johannesburg, South Africa

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.**
   The correct answer is **(b) Better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life**.
   The “Four Betters” are the organising principle of FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31: transforming the world's agrifood systems, including fisheries and aquaculture, toward **better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life** — leaving no one behind. FAO applies this same framework to its Blue Transformation agenda, which it presented at the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) in Nice, France, in June 2025, covering sustainable aquaculture growth, effective fisheries management, and resilient aquatic food value chains.
   Option (a) swaps in “better ocean” for “better life,” which is not one of FAO's four official terms. Options (c) and (d) replace “better production” with invented terms like “better coral reefs” and “better estuaries” — these sound thematically related to oceans but are not part of FAO's actual framework, which is generic across all agrifood systems, not ocean-specific vocabulary.
   ↑ Q1
2. **C.**
   The correct answer is **FAO's Roadmap 2022–2030 for sustainable growth in fisheries and aquaculture**.
   Blue Transformation is FAO's guiding vision for aquatic food systems, formalised as a Roadmap for 2022–2030. It builds on the 2021 Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, endorsed by all FAO Members at COFI's 34th session.
   It is not a treaty, a compensation fund, or a product certification — it is a strategic roadmap guiding FAO's own policy and technical work.
   ↑ Q2

3. **A.**
   The correct answer is **the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), February 2021**.
   Blue Transformation emerged from COFI 34 in February 2021, centred on the Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, negotiated and endorsed by all FAO Members. It was then highlighted through the SOFIA 2022 report and formalised as the Roadmap 2022–2030 at COFI 35 in September 2022.
   It has no connection to the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement or the Paris Agreement — those are separate international processes.
   ↑ Q3
4. **D.**
   The correct answer is **(d) 1, 2 and 3**.
   All three statements are correct. SOFIA 2024 reported that in 2022, aquaculture produced 94.4 million tonnes of aquatic animals, 51% of the world total, overtaking capture fisheries for the first time. Total fisheries and aquaculture production, including 37.8 million tonnes of algae, reached 223.2 million tonnes that year.
   ↑ Q4
5. **A.**
   The correct answer is **35%**.
   The Blue Transformation Roadmap 2022–2030 targets 35% growth in global sustainable aquaculture production by 2030, as part of its broader push to sustainably expand aquaculture, manage fisheries effectively, and upgrade aquatic food value chains.
   ↑ Q5
6. **B.**
   The correct answer is **the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC), Nice, France**.
   FAO presented its leading voice on marine and ocean issues, including sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and Blue Transformation, at UNOC held in Nice, France, in June 2025.
   ↑ Q6

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **True.** ↑ 2
3. **False.** ↑ 3

4. **True.** ↑ 4

5. **False.** ↑ 5

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