

Small Scale Fisheries (SSF)

—
Small scale fisheries in Africa generates over US\$2 billion annually
—

—
About 5.2 million people in Africa are engaged in small scale fisheries
—

—
Small Scale Fisheries feeds over 200 million people in Africa
—



SSF: Policy Implementation Challenges

-By Aviwe Sifuba, Tabisile Mhlana, Boury Angelique Diouf, Sibani Mngomezulu, Ebenezer Ntsiful

Introduction

Representing about 85 percent of total fish harvest in Africa, the small-scale fisheries are characterized by striking, wooden canoes used over hundred years with synonymous fishing practices on the continent.

Almost all communities along the coast identifies themselves as artisanal fishers, thus small-scale fishers which is very critical for the provision of food and livelihood support to coastal populace. Small-scale fisheries in Africa are important for the food security of more than 200 million people, and for the employment of around 2.3 million fishers targeting fisheries in the various marine, brackish and freshwater environments¹

¹ [African Small-Scale Fisheries. *TBTI Regional Synthesis Report - Executive Summary*. Retrieved from <http://toobigtoignore.net/3wsfc-small-%C2%ADscale-fisheries-in-africa/>



Globally, fishery sectors are regulated by hierarchical governing mode, with nation states as the dominant actors. This has particularly been the case after the declaration of the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** which extended the state's jurisdiction and responsibility for fisheries to 200 nautical miles.² There has been a growing appreciation in recent years of the need to re-embed the responsibility and function of fisheries governance to local and regional organizations as a tool for enhancing governability. The SSF Guidelines express support for this transition. From a governability enhancement perspective SSF is shifting from hierarchical to co-governance, and in some instances, self-governance, might be the new pathways. (Chuenpagdee and Jentoft, 2018)

National Legal Frameworks

In South Africa, the Small-Scale Fisheries Policy (2012), was promulgated to provide redress and recognition to the rights of Small-Scale fisher communities by adopting a community-based, co-management approach. It further envisages that fishing rights will be allocated to small-scale fishing communities and thus communities will be involved in managing fisheries together with government.³

In Namibia, The Southern Africa development community (SADC) Protocol on Fisheries states that parties are required to 'seek a rational and equitable balance between social and economic objectives' by providing legal, administrative and enforcement measures that protect the fishing rights, tenure, and fishing grounds of artisanal and subsistence fishers, and consider the needs of disadvantaged fishers.⁴ The first two community run fisheries were given legal status in 2016 with the gazetting of the first two Fisheries Reserves in terms of the Inland Fisheries Resources Act.⁵ Guidelines have been developed in conjunction with stakeholders for community-managed fisheries areas.

Fisheries Resources Management and Protection Act, Act 625 of Ghana promotes co-operation among local fishermen and advance development of artisanal fishing, among others.

² *Exploring Challenges in Small-Scale Fisheries Governance*, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-17034-3_1.

³ *Achieving Equity in the Fishing Industry: The Fate of Informal Fishers ...*, <https://perjournal.co.za/article/view/2435>.

⁴ [Southern African Development Community (SADC) FSTAU. A strategic framework for food security in the region. Gaborone: SADC; 1997.].

⁵ *Namibia's freshwater fish supports up to 250 000 - Business Express*, <https://nambusinessexpress.com/?p=764>.

SSF Policy Implementation Cases in Africa



The Case of South Africa: Coffee Bay

Coffee Bay, a small traditional fishing coastal town located along the Wild Coast of the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa with approximately 258 population, (stats 2011). The town faces high unemployment rate, housing shortages, infrastructure blockage, low levels of education etc. These fishers' harvest fishing resources for consumption and some for local sale. In 2015 a roll-out plan emerged to implement small-scale fisheries policy and regulations relating to small-scale fishing to guide the rights allocation to small-scale fisheries as the SSFP provides a mechanism for allocating fishing rights to Small Scale fishing communities and ensures equitable access to marine living resources for these communities which eradicated the Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) (Isaacs & Hara 2015). The fishers and fishing communities are co-managing the marine resources with the fisheries department at the various administrative levels.⁶

Isaacs and Witbooi, (2019), mentioned that the SSFP goes beyond ensuring the Constitutional right to access to sufficient food as SSF create opportunities for fishers

to participate in a formalized value chain as part of a development agenda that is concerned with poverty alleviation, food security, access to financial capital and subsidies. However, in some areas of South Africa more especially the rural areas, the SSFP is viewed as just some piece of paper with empty promises as there are no enabling tools or resources to ensure that the SSFP objectives are fulfilled. The policy also restricts the sale of fishes to specific appointed buyers. This has led to trading in illegal market with artisanal fishers.



Some fishers attested to the trading in illegal market during the Master Plan consultation that they sell their fish in any amount the buyer is willing to pay. Some artisanal fishers do not have boats. Those with boats also have no skippers license, no registered launch site around the area. Those that are not waiting on government to provide financial support for fishing tools continue with traditional ways but still do not have storage facilities. Storage facilities are crucial because the buyers are not keen to come for few harvests considering that even the roads to their villages are in a bad condition. Some co-ops were trained to develop the prepare business and funding proposals however there is poor representation of local communities and/or those in attendance

⁶ Fisheries crime, human rights and small-scale fisheries in South Africa ...

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X18309503>.

are illiterate meaning they will need an official to hold their hand which is impossible with the insufficient officials. SSF co-ops believe that the legislation is working against them as law enforcement is more applicable to them than the large scale / commercial fishing industries. They observe vessels in the ocean space which are roaming.

The Case of Namibia

Emerging evidence positions Namibia's Small-Scale Fisheries sector as an important contributor to the local economy.⁷ Annually, Namibia's Inland Small-Scale fisheries sub-sector employs an estimated 45,000 Namibians in seasonal and full-time jobs and provides an estimated 10,000 metric tonnes of fish valued at N\$ 230 million; whereas the Coastal Small-Scale Fisheries subsector employs over 1,500 seasonal and full-time workers and contributes approximately 3000 metric tonnes at a value of N\$ 27,6 million to the local economy.



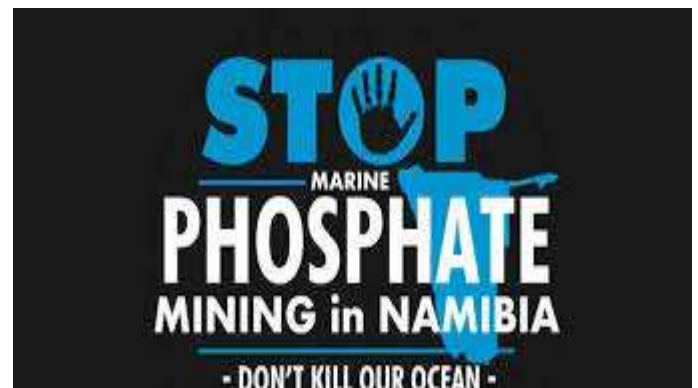
In June 2022, the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) approved the dredging of marine phosphate material within mining licence area ML170. This is

⁷ Namibia launches national plan of action for Small-Scale Fisheries ..., <https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/news-and-events/detail-es/es/c/1543238/>.

⁸ Fishing industry questions integrity of environmental chamber CEO, <https://www.africa->

after reviewing the latest scoping report and public consultation by Namibia Marine Phosphates (NMP) about the original environmental impact assessment (EIA).⁸

The project was found to virtually have “no disadvantages”. According to the NCE, the possible concerns raised by stakeholders have been vigorously assessed and evaluated by independent experts in various fields and they found no significant downside to the phosphate mining project i.e. no significant environmental impact on the marine ecosystem and its biodiversity.⁹



Progressive legislation in Namibia that supports the advancement of small-scale fisheries has not necessarily achieved intended outcomes as commercial marine mining licenses granted threaten to invalidate the industry. There has been court action to interdict phosphate mining in the seabed and it remains to be seen if phosphate mining co-exists with small scale fisheries.

The Case of Ghana

press.net/namibia/all-news/fishing-industry-questions-integrity-of-environmental-chamber-ceo.
⁹ Phosphate mining gets approval - Namibian Mining News, <https://namibianminingnews.com/phosphate-mining-gets-approval/>.

Small scale fisheries in Ghana provide about 70 percent of locally marine fishes landed on the shores of Ghana (Bortey et al, 2022). The sector provides livelihoods to about 2.2 million people (World Bank, 2016). More than 14,700 canoes operate across 300 landing beaches accounting for around 11% of canoes in West Africa. Ghana has the highest fish dependence in Africa, providing 60% of animal protein intake with a yearly per capital¹⁰ fish consumption of an estimated 28 kg.

Act 625 stipulates for promotion of co-operation among local fishers and advance development of artisanal fishing; however, artisanal fishing is in a perilous state with severe implications for the economic and social rights of small-scale fishing communities.

After two decades of the passage of the Fisheries Act in Ghana, small scale fisheries are becoming more vulnerable worsening their livelihoods. There has been a continues decline of the average annual income of artisanal fishers by 40 percent in the last 15years.



Critical fish stock, such as the sardinella, are currently dwindling with treats of total depletion due to over exploitation of these fisheries resources, due to the use of illegal fishing methods and practices,

¹⁰ A HUMAN RIGHTS LENS ON THE IMPACTS OF INDUSTRIAL ILLEGAL FISHING AND ..., <https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/EJF->

climate change effects, inadequate data for marine fishery management and inadequate institutional capacity for monitoring and enforcement (MOFAD, 2015).

Artisanal fishers in Ghana feel discriminated and marginalized in the decision-making process. This has led to constant conflicts between artisanal fishers and other fisheries sectors.

Suddenly this discrimination towards small scale fisheries have been coupled by decline in fish catch which has also been generally attributed to high demand for fish, excess fishing efforts, open-access nature of fishery, climate change, illegal fishing practices, unreported and unregulated fishing levels (Kassah, J.E 2022).

Artisanal fishers suffer damage to their fishing gear by industrial trawlers with most of them not being able to obtain compensation for damage caused.

FINDINGS

- The policies are not implementable in underprivileged communities
- Inadequate funding for policy implementation
- There is no harmonization between mining/oil and gas laws and regulation that promotes small scale fishing
- Small scale fisheries are vulnerable
- There is conflict between artisanal fishing and commercial fishing

RECOMMENDATIONS

General

Summary-A-human-rights-lens-on-illegal-and-overfishing-2021-final.pdf.

- Promote sustainable resource management in small-scale fisheries.
- Promote participatory and action-based research: significantly improve studies on the artisanal fishing sector and ensure that this information is well disseminated.
- Artisanal fisheries need more political support at government level in Africa.
- Improve public information and monitoring possibilities on investments and activities in other sectors that have an impact on fishing communities and on the procedures surrounding social and environmental impact assessments.

Coffee Bay – South Africa

- The fisheries sector must aid communities with the appropriate infrastructure support, advice and put mechanisms in place to ensure communities derive maximum benefits from marine resources in their area. These mechanisms will include a comprehensive development finance scheme for the storage of fish, skills and training in the processing, storing, packaging, marketing and transport and basic management skills (finance, management, logistics, human resources); the establishment of locally based and owned marketing companies; and the development of a South African label/certificate for fish caught by small-scale fisheries.
- Adapt the Fisheries legislations considering traditional practices and local specificities.
- The policy should be revised to provide an opening for

communities to add value to their catch, rather than restricting them to sell to specific appointed buyers as has been the case until now.

Namibia

- Create marine protected areas.
- Consider ocean zonation through Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) to avoid user conflict between mining industry and SSF sector.

Ghana

- Ensure measures aimed at reducing fishing effort, including closed seasons are accompanied by alternative livelihood support to small-scale fisheries. This will lead to an increase in the fish stock.
- Prioritize implementation of strict controls on the industrial trawl sector and limit of harmful fishing practices.
- Ensure all offences by industrial trawl vessels are investigated and sanctions applied in accordance with minimum requirements in the law to ensure they have a deterrent effect.
- Improve transparency and community participation in decision-making, particularly concerning the allocation of licenses to industrial or foreign vessels.
- . Do not favor foreign-owned fishing companies at the expense of artisanal fishing communities.

CONCLUSIONS

In Africa, it is estimated that the fishing sector provides income for over 10 million people engaged in fish production, processing, and trade. And the sector

contributes to the livelihoods and food security of over 200 million people on the continent¹¹.

For a fishery to be sustainable, it is important to give attention to ensuring that the stocks of fish fished and the ecosystem they live in are kept healthy and resilient over time. Such efforts will need to take all who depend on fish for food and livelihood into account¹².

The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) is a comprehensive approach to managing fisheries, looking at how fisheries affect and interacts with society, economy, culture, and environment. The EAF is based on the idea that human well-being and ecosystem health are linked to one another.

Small-scale fishing communities can play a significant role in managing, restoring, conserving and protecting aquatic resources and ecosystems. States and government institutions can empower and support fishing communities to engage in such participatory management also called co-management of fisheries resources together with government institutions and other groups.

Co-management is important because it gives voice to the fishers so they can express their needs and claims and contribute valuable knowledge (including traditional knowledge) to the formulation of policies and regulations. It is important in both inland and marine fisheries to make sure that both participate in deciding on management measures affecting their livelihoods, including protected areas. When fishers are

involved in making decisions and rules on resource management, these arrangements are likely to be more appropriate, which increases compliance with the rules.

It's also needed to develop and improve management systems and cooperation in a participatory way. All who have an interest in using the resource have the right to be informed, consulted and included in decision-making processes.

States are encouraged to prevent and stop all illegal and destructive fishing practices, avoid overfishing, and put in place systems for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS). Small-scale fishers are, in turn, encouraged to support and uphold such MCS systems.

REFERENCES

A HUMAN RIGHTS LENS ON THE IMPACTS OF INDUSTRIAL ILLEGAL FISHING AND ..., <https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/EJF-Summary-A-human-rights-lens-on-illegal-and-overfishing-2021-final.pdf>.

Achieving Equity in the Fishing Industry: The Fate of Informal Fishers ..., <https://perjournal.co.za/article/view/2435>

Bortey Nketia Alabi-Doku, S. C., Ampofo-Yeboah, A., & Asiedu, B. Ghana's Fisheries Policies; Evolution and Performance. *Exploring Challenges in Small-Scale Fisheries Governance*, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-17034-3_1.

Chuenpagdee, R., & Jentoft, S. (2018). Transforming the governance of small-

¹¹ *OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN TRANSFORMING THE FISH SECTOR*, https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Backing-Small-scale-Fishers_PLAAS.pdf.

¹² *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries*, <https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/guidelines/resource-management/en/>.

scale fisheries. *Maritime studies*, 17(1), 101-115.

Fishing industry questions integrity of environmental chamber CEO, <https://www.africa-press.net/namibia/all-news/fishing-industry-questions-integrity-of-environmental-chamber-ceo>.

Isaacs, M., & Hara, M. (2015). Backing small-scale fishers: opportunities and challenges in transforming the fish sector.

Kassah, J. E., & Asare, C. (2022). Conflicts in the Artisanal Fishing Industry of Ghana: Reactions of Fishers to Regulatory Measures. In *Blue Justice* (pp. 99-118). Springer, Cham.

Moenieba Isaacs, Emma Witbooi 2019, Fisheries crime, human rights, and small-scale fisheries in South Africa: A case of bigger fish to fry. Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape, South Africa b PescaDOLUS International Fisheries Crime Research Network, South Africa

M Young 2013, achieving equity in the fishing industry: the fate of informal fishers in the context of the policy for the small-scale fisheries sector in south africa <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/pej.v16i5.6> 2013 Volume 16 No 5 ISSN 1727-378

Moenieba Isaacs & Mafaniso Hara 2015, backing small-scale fishers: opportunities and challenges in transforming the fish sector. Rural Report Part 2

Namibia's freshwater fish supports up to 250 000 – Business Express, <https://nambusinessexpress.com/?p=764>.

Okafor-Yarwood, I., Kadagi, N. I., Belhabib, D., & Allison, E. H. (2022). Survival of the Richest, not the Fittest: How attempts to improve governance impact African

small-scale marine fisheries. *Marine Policy*, 135, 104847.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN TRANSFORMING THE FISH SECTOR, https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Backing-Small-scale-Fishers_PLAAS.pdf.

Phosphate mining gets approval - Namibian Mining News, <https://namibianminingnews.com/phosphate-mining-gets-approval/>.

Sowman, M., & Cardoso, P. (2010). Small-scale fisheries and food security strategies in countries in the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) region: Angola, Namibia and South Africa. *Marine Policy*, 34(6), 1163-1170.

(2016), Safety and sustainability for small scale fishers in West Africa. World Bank. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/05/16/safety-and-sustainability-for-small-scale-fishers-in-west-africa>

Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, <https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/guidelines/resource-management/en/>.