



LEARNING ABOUT
14 **b.1**
INDICATOR

SDG Indicator 14.b.1 Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries

Lesson: Creating an enabling environment for sustainable small-scale fisheries

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Food and Agriculture
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working for Zero Hunger

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SDG Indicator 14.b.1 Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries Web

This lesson will introduce you to the key challenges and policy implications for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries.

You will also learn about the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines) as an international tool to support small-scale fisheries.

This lesson will demonstrate that it takes the collaboration of various key actors to achieve lasting improvements in small-scale fisheries.

Learning objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- identify the key challenges faced by small-scale fisheries, with a focus on access to marine resources and markets;
- identify the policy implications of SDG Target 14.b;
- appreciate the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines) as a tool to address those challenges;
- recognize the importance of collaborative and participatory action towards the achievement of SDG 14.b and related targets.

Introduction

The **small-scale fisheries sector** tends to be firmly rooted in local communities, traditions and values. Many small-scale fishers are **self-employed** and usually provide fish for **direct consumption** within their households or communities, along with livelihood earnings.

About **90 percent** of all people directly dependent on capture fisheries are from the **small-scale fisheries** sector. **Women are significant participants** in the sector, particularly in post-harvest and processing activities.

As such, **small-scale fisheries serve as an economic and social engine**, providing food and nutrition security, employment and other multiplier effects to local economies, while underpinning the livelihoods of riparian communities.

Key challenges for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries

While the specific nature of small-scale fisheries can vary greatly, there are **a number of challenges** that are almost universal. They include:

- vulnerability to **climate change and disaster risks**
- insufficient **access to services** (e.g. health, education, financial services)
- insufficient **recognition of the role of women**

There are, however, two critical issues which are of particular importance, and which are therefore reflected in SDG14.b: **access to marine resources** and **access to markets**.

A small-scale fisheries scenario

Let's meet Darya and Alex, a married couple from a small fishing community in Africa.

The well-being of Darya and Alex's family (current and future) is closely linked to their livelihood base - small-scale fisheries. Both take part in small-scale fisheries activities and complement each other's work. Alex

"Every morning, I meet my neighbours on the beach and we go fishing together in our canoes. We paddle out to our fishing sites and spend a few hours fishing with our nets." - Alex

"When the men return, I am waiting on the beach with the other wives, ready to receive the day's catch. We clean the fish and take it to the local market for sale. We also save some of the catch to eat at home." Darya

The fisheries resources, associated market mechanisms, and division of labour all make up the livelihood of this married couple and many others in the community.

How does Darya and Alex's family live? They face several challenges:

➤ MARINE RESOURCES

Larger fleets are encroaching on our traditional small-scale fishing areas.

A tourism development is under way on the shore close to the village. This reduces access to our traditional fishing grounds, as tourists use the area for swimming and watersports.

Protected areas: The Government is planning a marine protected area – all without proper consultation with our community.

➤ ACCESS TO MARKETS

Trader - The road conditions are so bad and our trucks are not refrigerated. By the time we get to the village, half the fresh fish has been lost. I can't reach the market by myself. There's no transport that **connects the village with the urban market** area.

Market prices/ info

I am not aware of the updated prices. I don't receive market information.

To overcome these issues and improve our situation, together with the other wives we are discussing forming an organization. We want to increase our organizational skills, as well as our knowledge of markets and related information, so as to sell our products, locally and also beyond national borders. We are also investigating using our mobile phones to access and share price and market information.

There is a high level of dependency on middlemen, who have **access to price and market information**.

Running water

Darya struggles to prepare safe and hygienic fishery products, due to **lack of running water** at the landing site. It is difficult to clean and process the fish properly. I need to collect and carry lots of water every day.

The **main challenges** that small-scale fisheries face relate to restrictions on access to marine resources and markets.

Access to MARINE RESOURCES is restricted due to both:

- **Diminishing resources** as a result of their overexploitation and threats to supporting habitats and ecosystems.
- **Competition for access** within the fisheries sector, and with other sectors (e.g. tourism, energy, aquaculture, agriculture, mining, industry and infrastructure developments).

Access to MARKETS is restricted through a combination of **inappropriate infrastructure and Limited access to technology, knowledge, financial services information** These factors penalize small-scale fisheries actors, in particular **women** involved in post-harvest activities and marketing.

Access to MARINE RESOURCES

Small-scale fisheries rely on access to the fish, shellfish, aquatic plants etc. that actors in the sector target for their livelihoods. Equally important is access to the adjacent areas – without landing sites,

harbours, space for processing and marketing, as well as for living, the small-scale fisheries sector cannot exist.



What is happening in coastal areas?

We often see that coastal areas are popular not only for **small-scale fishing**, but also for **larger fishing operations**. Small-scale fisheries often rely on customary access rights. Where these rights are not protected and recognized by the state, they often become meaningless.

Example Customary access rights in Aceh (Indonesia)

In Aceh, coastal fishing is organized and regulated almost entirely by customary practices, which play a crucial role in the choice of fishing technology, crew formation, regulation of fishing activity at sea, norms of distribution of earnings from fishing, coastal conservation, conflict resolution and so on.

The customary institution is named after its elected leader – Panglima Laot (Sea Commander). An lhok is the jurisdiction of the Panglima Laot. Every lhok therefore develops its own set of unwritten customs with regard to the abovementioned practices. While these may be broadly similar across lhoks, there can be nuances that are specific to any given lhok. For example an lhok that has a river and estuary may have norms about how, where and when boats can be docked on the river. An lhok that has small islands off the coast may set up a no-fishing zone and develop regulations related to it. Source: www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2062e/i2062e00.htm

Even if there is some kind of zoning or other access arrangement for the different fleet segments, these may not always be respected and enforced, often to the disadvantage of the less powerful small-scale fisheries.

The use of the term "rights" in fisheries

The use of the term "rights" in a fisheries context has tended to imply fishing rights as part of rights-based fisheries management. More recent discussions have evolved, especially in the context of small-scale fisheries, to include a human rights perspective and the right to secure and just livelihoods, including social and economic rights and rights to related resources (such as land). Linking fishing rights and human rights reflects a move towards an approach that is more in line with the reality of the diverse livelihoods of small-scale fishing communities and the complexity of

poverty. Within this concept of a broader rights approach, the importance of secure access to resources and tenure rights should be stressed.

Globally, **fishing efforts are growing**, both in larger fleets and in small-scale fisheries, and **marine resources are generally declining**, due to the following reasons.

► **Larger-scale fisheries** use more powerful boats, with nets that can extend for many kilometres. These boats often have substantial on-board storage capacity, which enables them to stay at sea for months at a time, hauling in thousands of tonnes of fish. For some fisheries, the amount of unwanted species in the catch can be considerable, e.g. in the shrimp fishery. On large boats, the technology used to find fish is often sophisticated, such as sonar.

► In small-scale fisheries, the use of **more efficient fishing gear** for species selectivity is important, in order to reduce the capture of unwanted, protected or undersized aquatic animals. Traditional fishing practices are often highly dependent on the local environment, and gear can change according to the fishing season.

► **Illegal fishing** can take many forms. On the one hand, it can have a negative impact on small-scale fisheries, for example if larger fleets enter areas reserved for small-scale fishing fleets. On the other, some small-scale fisheries practices, such as the use of dynamite, cyanide or mosquito nets, have a negative impact on fish stocks and the natural habitat (e.g. reefs) and contribute to overfishing.

► **Pollution** due to industrial or agricultural effluents can greatly affect available fish stocks. Pollution is often concentrated in coastal areas, where small-scale fisheries generally operate, so those areas are particularly exposed to the impact of pollution generated by other sectors.

► **Habitat degradation** can be caused by a number of human and natural factors, including pollution. Habitat degradation negatively influences the ability of aquatic organisms to reproduce and feed. The clearing of mangrove areas, for example, reduces available breeding grounds for shrimp and other species. The increasing presence of plastic in water bodies is also contributing to habitat degradation. It is estimated that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans.

Other sectors also have an interest in coastal areas, and add to competition over access to coastal zones and related resources.

► **Tourism** is expanding in areas with beautiful beaches and coral reefs.

► **Oil and gas extraction** can threaten small-scale fisheries, including through the impact of spills.

► **Maritime transport** usually operates in areas beyond the reach of small-scale fishing fleets.

However, depending on the context, routes to ports can interfere with small-scale fisheries areas.

► **Maritime protected areas** are sometimes established by environmental institutions without proper engagement with fishery communities.

► **Urban and industrial development** is being driven by growing populations. This increases pressure, especially on coastal areas, where small-scale fishing communities live. The waste and effluents generated by these developments contribute to the pollution of water bodies and the degradation of habitats.



It is important to ensure **participatory approaches**, both for **fisheries management**, but also for wider **coastal development and management issues** that allow small-scale fishing communities to engage in processes that deeply affect their livelihoods.

Access to MARKETS

Small-scale fisheries supply products to local, domestic, regional and global markets. Currently, the distribution of benefits along the **value chain**¹ often does not provide a fair share to the primary producers – small-scale fisheries and small-scale processors.

Infrastructure

Inadequate **handling and processing equipment and infrastructure** is an important challenge in small-scale fisheries. Often, there is no access to ice or cold chains, and fish is therefore traded directly on the beach.

🗨️ *“I dry my fish on the beach, but in the end a lot of it is contaminated with sand or insects, or stolen by birds or stray dogs and cats!” - Darya*

Technology

Access to **information and communication technology** in small-scale fishing communities.

🗨️ *“Mobile technology offers strong potential for small-scale fisheries. In some countries, there are specific apps to support data collection on fish catches by the fishers. Safety-at-sea can also be enhanced if information about accidents or weather is transmitted via smartphones. And many more*

¹ **Value chain** - a chain of activities. Products pass through all activities of the chain in order, and at each stage the product gains some value. The chain of activities gives the products more added value than the sum of added values of all activities. It is important not to mix the concept of the value chain with the costs occurring throughout the activities.

	<p>uses are still to be explored, involving the fishing communities themselves!” - Darya</p>
<p>Market related information</p>	<p>Information about markets and prices is not readily available for all. This can create a situation of dependency on middlemen. Not all actors in the small-scale fisheries value chain benefit equally!</p> <p>🗨️ <i>“The women marketing fish from our small-scale fisheries depend greatly on the middlemen who organize transport and sales of fish in the larger villages and urban areas. They set the price! But luckily, the women are now getting organized in an association and have more bargaining power. They are also exploring how to use mobile phones to obtain direct information about markets and prices in their areas.” - Darya</i></p>
<p>Post-harvest losses</p>	<p>Post-harvest and other value chain activities are crucial components for sustainable small-scale fisheries, with women playing a particularly important role in post-harvest activities.</p> <p>🗨️ <i>“Every day I go to the landing beach with other women from the village to buy fresh fish. Some of us dry or smoke the fish. Others take the bus or walk to the surrounding villages to sell the fresh fish. It is hard work – but we are proud of what we do. Of course, if we could have a processing area with access to running water and ice, we could provide much better products!” - Darya</i></p>

Providing secure access to MARINE RESOURCES

Marketing can also prove to be tricky for small-scale fisheries, because **individually traded quantities** are often fairly limited. Furthermore, in some cases there can be developments in **international markets that constrain small-scale fisheries**. This can be the result of competition from important fish products, or of stringent trade regulations, certification and traceability requirements.

Policy implications of SDG Target 14.b

We have seen that Darya and Alex face **challenges** related to food processing, transportation and marketing. These impact their capability to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.



What are the consequences of insecure access to resources and markets?

Insecure access to resources and markets **results in socio-economic and political marginalization** of small-scale fishing communities. These communities often live in remote areas, with limited access to other income-generating activities.

Lack of access to marine resources and markets:

- ➔ hinders the sector in making a full **contribution to food security and poverty eradication**
- ➔ threatens **stability and social cohesion** within communities
- ➔ fuels **outmigration** by young people
- ➔ favours **unsustainable fishing and processing practices**

Providing secure access to MARINE RESOURCES

Secure access rights for small-scale fishing communities to marine resources **are crucial**, so as to enable small-scale fisheries actors to take on their role as resource stewards. These rights are central to the realization of their human rights, food security, poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, social stability, housing security, economic growth and rural and social development.



A strong **sense of ownership of the resource** is an important incentive for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources by small-scale fisheries communities.

Providing secure access to MARKETS

Improving access to foreign markets

To improve access to foreign markets, more technical and financial assistance is needed for developing countries. Specifically, these countries' small-scale artisanal fishers need support in gaining awareness of regulatory measures and standards, and how to comply with them.

Improving access to local markets

For small-scale fishers, there is an urgent need to improve local infrastructure, such as roads and electricity for refrigeration. At the same time, local producer organizations must be established or strengthened to ensure a fair distribution of benefits.

Ensuring that small-scale fisheries actors have secure access to both resources and markets requires an **enabling environment in terms of laws, regulations and policies**. Only if the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty eradication is fully recognized through such an environment, can small-scale fishing communities fully develop their potential.

Small-scale fishing communities can play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources through their **direct involvement in management decisions and processes**. They can greatly improve the socio-economic conditions of their communities and the related local area and beyond, if better access to markets triggers increases in employment, the provision of related services and a fairer distribution of profits.



What are the actual benefits of investing in achieving Target 14.b?

14.b aims at balancing the access rights between different fleet segments, recognizing the value of small-scale artisanal fisheries in terms of food security and poverty eradication. This supports therefore also the achievement of other SDGs, in particular SDG 1 and 2, as well as of other international agreements, including the right to adequate food.



Why is it important to ensure secure access to resources and markets for small-scale fishing communities?

Lack of access to resources and markets will diminish communities' well-being by limiting income-generating opportunities, in particular for young people, and sources of nutrition leading to significant social and environmental effects.

Granting secure access to resources and markets contributes to ensuring that small-scale fishing communities conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, in the spirit of SDG14.

Investing in achieving Target 14.b is therefore imperative, not only to guarantee sustainable livelihoods for the millions of people directly engaged in small-scale fisheries, but also to support the achievement of a large number of related SDGs and global commitments made by governments.

Creating an enabling environment

Challenges in accessing both resources and markets are often caused by the **lack of an enabling environment**. In order to achieve secure access to resources and markets – as called for in SDG Target 14.b – an enabling environment that recognizes and protects the rights of small-scale fishers is critical.

Key elements of an enabling environment to sustainable small-scale fisheries

Appropriate legal, regulatory and policy frameworks

Only when small-scale fisheries are properly embedded in national policies, strategies, regulations and laws – within the fisheries sector and more broadly – can we be sure that the sector is no longer invisible and will receive the necessary attention and investments.

Example Policy for the small-scale fisheries sector in South Africa

In all four South African coastal provinces, previous fishery management practices have unintentionally marginalized traditional fishers in fishing communities. As a result, many fishers were unsuccessful in obtaining fishing rights to access marine resources, which they have traditionally been dependent on for their livelihoods. Small-scale fisheries management is about changing that and creating a positive story. The South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has engaged in lengthy consultation processes with communities and stakeholders, in order to make a tradition of thousands of years a reality once again. [The policy: www.nda.agric.za/doaDev/sideMenu/fisheries/21_HotIssues/April2010/Small%20Scale/Gazett-ed%20Small%20Scale%20Fisheries%20Policy%202012-06.pdf](http://www.nda.agric.za/doaDev/sideMenu/fisheries/21_HotIssues/April2010/Small%20Scale/Gazett-ed%20Small%20Scale%20Fisheries%20Policy%202012-06.pdf)

The Small-Scale Fishing Policy (SSFP) was adopted in 2012. The challenge, however, now lies in implementation, given the complexity of the policy, and limited government capacity and funding.

 *“In order to overcome the existing challenges, I will promote equitable access to resources and markets for small-scale fishers, by try creating an enabling environment.” - Darya*

Specific initiatives to support small-scale fisheries

However, it is not enough to have a favourable legal/regulatory/policy framework, if this is not turned into concrete action on the ground. Specific projects, investments and initiatives must complement the written intentions.

“Our government recently approved a new small-scale fisheries policy. We have developed an action plan for implementation with the fishing communities, and have just inaugurated a new fish drying facility that the local women’s organization is using and managing, after we provided technical training through our extension service.”- Alex

Example The SEKAYA MARITIM programme in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the government is targeting 1 000 villages for development during 2015-2019, conducting activities such as:

emission of a fishers card;	training;
diversification and business development	land certification
access to finance (microfinance institution)	SMART information system (real-time data)
partnership development	appreciation through awards.

Source: www.fao.org/3/a-i5253e.pdf

👉 Institutional mechanisms for the participation of small-scale fisheries organizations in relevant processes

Small-scale fishing communities and their representatives need to have a voice in processes that impact their livelihoods. This is particularly true in relation to the management of marine resources, but also more broadly. Small-scale fishing communities should have a say in coastal development affecting their areas, and they should also be able to express their needs and put forward their ideas and suggestions in relation to broader community development issues.

Example Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMC) – Philippines

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMC) were established under the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998. FAMRCs are formed in all municipalities/cities abutting municipal waters as defined by this Code. Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMC) were established under the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998. FAMRCs are formed in all municipalities/cities abutting municipal waters as defined by this Code.

The FARMCs are formed by fisherfolk organizations/cooperatives and NGOs in the locality, and are assisted by Local Government Units (LGUs) and other government bodies. Before organizing FARMCs, the LGUs, NGOs, fisherfolk, and other relevant People’s Organisations (POs) are expected to undertake consultation and orientation on the councils’ formulation. FARMCs have a

nested organizational structure, where the National FARMC Council is a multistakeholder advisory body including a 15-member council, of whom:

5 are fishworkers;	1 are from NGOs; and
2 are drawn from academia;	the remainder are from the government.
5 represent commercial operators;	

The functions of FARMCs include:

- assisting in the preparation of the Municipal Fishery Development Plan and submitting the plan to the Municipal Development Council;
- recommending the enactment of municipal fishery ordinances to the Town Councils through its Committee on Fisheries;
- assisting in the enforcement of fishery laws, rules and regulations in municipal waters;
- advising the Town Council on fishery matters through its Committee on Fisheries, if such has been organized; and
- performing other such functions that may be assigned by the Town Council.

Source: www.fao.org/3/a-i3540e.pdf

“We have just signed an agreement with the Federal SSF Organization, in which our mechanisms for collaboration are set out. One important pillar of this collaboration is a monthly meeting between the leaders of this organization, including the women's organization leader and the fisheries administration, to discuss important issues and decisions.” - Darya

Example

A national small-scale fisheries policy has been recently adopted at national level. This provides an important entry point for Natee – our fisheries administration official – to further create an enabling environment for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries, and in particular access to resources and markets.

Possible actions that will create an enabling environment are:

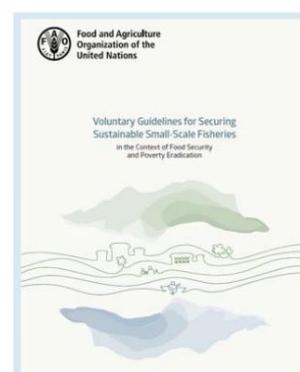
- ▶ Engage in implementation of the SSF policy by organizing an awareness-raising and action planning workshop with the federation of small-scale fishing organizations.
- ▶ Provide extension services and training in organizational strengthening for women processing small-scale fish products.
- ▶ Reallocate fisheries access rights to new large-scale vessels, as the small-scale fishing rights are not formalized.

Besides, the local small-scale producer organizations or community organizations, should be encouraged and enabled to manage and operate landings sites and small-scale fishing communities supported to have their customary fishing rights formally recognized, as called for in the new policy.

Overview of SSF Guidelines

Countries have recognized the need to address this situation and in 2014, after a long participatory consultation process, members of the FAO Committee on Fisheries endorsed an internationally negotiated and agreed instrument dedicated specifically to small-scale fisheries, complementing the [Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries](http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/v9878e/v9878e00.htm). www.fao.org/docrep/005/v9878e/v9878e00.htm

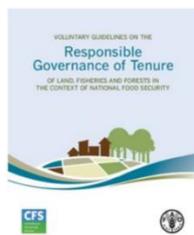
The *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)* set out principles and guidance for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries governance and development.



This video gives you a brief overview of the SSF Guidelines.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqC9Bef-lwE>

The SSF Guidelines and Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure



The SSF Guidelines are closely related to the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure for Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of National Food Security*

(www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2801e/i2801e.pdf). In common with this instrument, the SSF Guidelines place a high priority on the realization of human rights and on the need to address vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The SSF Guidelines are a powerful tool to inform improved small-scale fisheries governance and development, including in relation to **access to resources, markets and services**.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Chapter 5 - Responsible governance of tenure

5.4 States should take appropriate measures to identify, record and respect legitimate tenure right holders and their rights. Local norms and practices, as well as customary or otherwise preferential access to fishery resources and land by small-scale fishing communities, including indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, should be recognized, respected and protected in ways that are consistent with international human rights law.

5.7 Taking due account of Art. 6.18 of the Code, states should, where appropriate, grant preferential access of small-scale fisheries to fish in waters under national jurisdiction, with a view to achieving equitable outcomes for different groups of people, in particular vulnerable groups.

Article 6.18 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

Art. 6.18 "Recognizing the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security, States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under their national jurisdiction."

Regional consultations on implementation of the SSF Guidelines

If you want to know more about implementation of the SSF Guidelines, take a look at the following resources:

Eastern Africa: www.fao.org/3/a-i6751e.pdf

Latin America: www.fao.org/3/a-bc478s.pdf (in Spanish)

South Asia: www.fao.org/3/a-i7164e.pdf

Near East and North Africa: www.fao.org/3/a-i6095e.pdf

Indian Ocean and Southern Africa:

http://commissionoceanindien.org/fileadmin/projets/smartfish/MR/Report_SSF-109.pdf

And from our partners: <https://sites.google.com/site/ssfguidelines/home>

5.8 States should adopt measures to facilitate equitable access to fishery resources for small-scale fishing communities, including, as appropriate, redistributive reform, taking into account the provisions of the *Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*.

ACCESS TO MARKETS

Chapter 7 - Value chains, post-harvest and trade

7.6 States should facilitate access to local, national, regional and international markets and promote equitable and non-discriminatory trade for small-scale fisheries products. States should work together to introduce trade regulations and procedures that in particular support regional trade in products from small-scale fisheries, and take into account agreements under the World Trade Organization (WTO), bearing in mind the rights and obligations of WTO members where appropriate.

7.10 States should enable access to all relevant market and trade information for stakeholders in the small-scale fisheries value chain. Small-scale fisheries stakeholders must be able to access timely and accurate market information to help them adjust to changing market conditions. [Access to] Capacity development is also required, so that all small-scale fisheries stakeholders, and especially women and vulnerable and marginalized groups, can adapt to, and benefit equitably from, opportunities of global market trends and local situations, while minimizing any potential negative impacts.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Chapter 6 - Social development, employment and decent work

6.2 States should promote investment in human resource development such as health, education, literacy, digital inclusion and other skills of a technical nature that generate added value to the fisheries resources, as well as awareness-raising. States should take steps with a view to progressively ensure that members of small-scale fishing communities have affordable access to these and other essential services through national and subnational actions, including adequate housing, basic sanitation that is safe and hygienic, safe drinking water for personal and domestic use, and sources of energy.

6.9 All parties should take steps to institute measures that aim to eliminate violence and protect women exposed to such violence in small-scale fishing communities. States should ensure access to justice for victims of *inter alia* violence and abuse, including within the household or community.

6.17 States should promote access to information and to emergency location systems for rescue at sea for small-scale vessels.

It could be interesting to hear from our fisherfolk couple, and from the fisheries administration official as to **why SFF Guidelines are an important contribution** to their country's commitments in terms of eradicating poverty and ensuring food security and nutrition.

Darya and Alex have been introduced to the SSF Guidelines through the participatory approach previously described. They are happy to learn that they can use this tool to advocate for their rightful access to fisheries resources and markets. Let's see what they have to say about it.

"We have been fishing here for almost 30 years! Recently, we heard that a new law establishes that all fishing rights must be registered by the end of the year." - Darya



Thanks to the SFF Guidelines, Darya and Alex are now aware that, although they don't have formal, legally recognized tenure rights, they have historically and socially legitimate rights regarding the natural resources they use.

"We and most of my fisher neighbours didn't know about this new law. We thought that our rights had always existed, and would continue irrespective of what the government says. Furthermore, many people in my group don't have a document to register, or cannot get to the capital city to register one. Fortunately, I found out through the SFF Guidelines that in any case we have the right to continue fishing in our area." - Alex

Natee is proactive in finding ways of increasing the visibility of the SFF sector. To accomplish this, she is promoting equitable access to resources and markets, both of which she knows are key features supporting livelihoods, nutrition and economic development. Natee has learned that, luckily, these important linkages are part of well-established and agreed international guidelines (SSF Guidelines) that she can use to support these goals.

"I learned that by supporting implementation of the SSF Guidelines I would be helping my country's commitment to achieve the SDGs. I also learned that associated materials are available in direct support of implementation of these Guidelines. Of much interest and benefit to me, these products include a comprehensive guide to gender equity in relation to small-scale fisheries, as well as another on securing tenure." - Natee

To summarize:

SSF Guidelines apply equally to marine and inland fisheries, and they also target small-scale fishing communities, as well as regional and international organizations, academia/research, the private sector, NGOs and all others concerned with the fisheries sector, coastal and rural development and the use of the aquatic environment.

Who can help to improve small-scale fisheries?

The SSF Guidelines call for a balanced and equitable partnership approach, and cross-sectoral collaboration among key actors to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries. There are clearly different roles for different partners. Let's explore these.

➡ **Governments** have a key responsibility in relation to relevant policies, strategies, etc. – not only for fisheries, but also for overall socio-economic development. Political engagement at high level, together with investments in capacity and participatory decision-making processes, will be required in order to realize a new vision for small-scale fisheries.

➡ **Fishers and fish workers, through their organizations**, are the main drivers of change and play a major role in any bottom-up processes. Empowerment for collective action is an important task for this group, to ensure that small-scale fisheries are mainstreamed into relevant policies, strategies and actions at local, national and regional level, and that these policies, strategies and actions are implemented.

➡ **Other actors**, in particular academia and research, but also regional organizations, NGOs and others, should be at the interface of this dual strategy, playing a role in connecting, supplementing, documenting and strengthening the abovementioned efforts.

The **SSF Guidelines** repeatedly establish the key importance of **participatory approaches** to engaging the SSF subsector. To accomplish this, **stakeholder analyses**² and engagement methods such as **consultations** are encouraged, so as to ensure the inclusion of small-scale fisheries organizations and other actors in relevant decision-making processes.

² **Stakeholder analysis:** An approach to understanding a system through the identification of all key actors (or stakeholders), and describing their specific interests, power, motivations, and associations relating to that system, in order to interact with them appropriately.

Stakeholder: A large group of individuals and groups of individuals (including governmental and non-governmental institutions, traditional communities, universities, research institutions, development agencies and banks, donors, etc.) with an interest or claim (whether stated or implied) which has the potential of being impacted by or having an impact on a given project and its objectives. Stakeholder groups that have a direct or indirect "stake" can be at the household, community, local, regional, national, or international level.



What are participatory processes?

There are various forms of consultation and participation, including the following:

Consultation	Participation
Face-to-face engagement: interviews, questionnaires, focus group or one-on-one discussions, public meetings.	Working groups or parties , which include representatives of stakeholders who actively work with officials as partners.
Formal committees and parliamentary or public inquiries, which require participants to present their opinions in a formal setting.	Local, national or regional multistakeholder platforms and frameworks.
Written documents and submissions, in response to written proposals provided for public consultation.	Assigning responsibility for the development of draft policies to citizens themselves.

Sometimes, it might be necessary to use a **combination of approaches** to reach as many people as possible, and to make sure that they are engaged and heard.

Likewise, the **SDGs framework** makes a relevant point on fully **participatory and transparent approaches**:



SDG 16.7 – "Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels".

Summary

Small-scale fisheries are often socially, economically and politically marginalized. This has a negative impact on the sector’s ability to make its full contribution to food security, nutrition and poverty reduction.

Key challenges relate to access to resources: larger-scale fisheries and other industries are competing over access to the same space.

Furthermore, the presence of larger players in the market with better access to price and market information, as well as to credit and appropriate infrastructure, tend to penalize often unorganized small-scale fisheries.

Indeed, SDG Target 14.b calls for the provision of access to marine resources and markets for artisanal small-scale fishers, and the SSF Guidelines has been endorsed to improve small-scale fisheries governance and development.

A key aspect to achieve SDG 14.b is to establish an enabling environment for small-scale fisheries, which includes the existence and the implementation of laws, regulations and policies that specifically target or address the small-scale fisheries sector. This can only happen if all key players take part and assume their roles and responsibilities.