A GLOBAL TOOLKIT FOR PARTICIPATORY FISHERIES GOVERNANCE

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Protecting People and Planet

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The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) exists to protect the natural world and defend our basic human right to a secure environment.

EJF works internationally to inform policy and drive systemic, durable reforms to protect our environment and defend human rights.
We investigate and expose abuses and support environmental defenders, Indigenous peoples, communities and independent journalists on the frontlines of environmental injustice.
Our campaigns aim to secure peaceful, equitable and sustainable futures.

EJF is committed to combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as associated human rights abuses in the fishing sector.

Our investigators, researchers, filmmakers and campaigners work with grassroots partners and environmental defenders across the globe.

Our work to secure environmental justice aims to protect our global climate, ocean, forests and wildlife and defend basic human rights.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Glossary of key terms and definitions of concepts

Key definitions	Meaning
Community or participatory surveillance	Community or participatory surveillance refers to the active participation of fishing communities and their representatives in identifying, documenting and reporting illegal fishing and other harmful activities that impact the livelihoods of small-scale fishing communities (e.g. damage to local fishing vessels or other fishing gear by industrial vessels).
(Fisheries) Co–management association (CMA)	A community group that manages fisheries in partnership with local, regional and/or national governments.
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)	As detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) an EEZ is the area of sea up to 200 nm from shore over which a coastal state has specific rights and responsibilities, including with regards to the exploration, exploitation and conservation of resources.
Fisheries co–management	Defined by the FAO as "a mode of governance through which resource users' and government share responsibility and authority for the management of fishery resources, with support and assistance as needed from other stakeholders, external agents, academic and research institutions"
Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing	The FAO defines the three components of IUU fishing as follows: **Illegal fishing:** • conducted by national or foreign vessels in waters under the jurisdiction of a State, without the permission of that State, or in contravention of its laws and regulations; • conducted by vessels flying the flag of States that are parties to a relevant regional fisheries management organisation but operate in contravention of the conservation and management measures adopted by that organisation and by which the States are bound, or relevant provisions of the applicable international law; or • in violation of national laws or international obligations, including those undertaken by cooperating States to a relevant regional fisheries management organization. **Unreported fishing:** • which have not been reported, or have been misreported, to the relevant national authority, in contravention of national laws and regulations; or • are undertaken in the area of competence of a relevant regional fisheries management organisation which have not been reported or have been misreported, in contravention of the reporting procedures of that organisation. **Unregulated fishing:** • in the area of application of a relevant regional fisheries management organization that are conducted by vessels without nationality, or by those flying the flag of a State not party to that organization, or by a fishing entity, in a manner that is not consistent with or contravenes the conservation and management measures of that organization; or • in areas or for fish stocks in relation to which there are no applicable conservation or management measures and where such fishing activities are conducted in a manner inconsistent with State responsibilities for the conservation of living marine resources under international law.
Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ)	Defined by WorldFish as "a type of management measure that can be used to protect small-scale fisheries. They involve the creation of areas where certain types of fishing, typically industrial or large-scale, are prohibited or restricted"
International Maritime Organisation (IMO) number	An IMO number is a unique seven-digit number assigned to ships that remain unchanged throughout their lifetimes, regardless of changes to its name, flag, ownership or type.
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)	Defined by the IUCN as "clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values"
Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number	An MMSI number is a unique nine-digit number assigned to a radio or group or radios on board a vessel.
Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS)	Within the context of fisheries management, MCS is defined by the FAO as "the implementation of operations necessary to effect an agreed policy and plan for oceans and fisheries management".
National fishers associations (NFAs)	The groups and organisations that represent fishers and fish traders at a national level. Their primary purpose is to advocate for the rights of the individuals and communities they represent, and to promote and uphold their interests nationwide.
Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF)	Defined by the FAO as being "broadly characterized as a dynamic and evolving sector employing labour intensive harvesting, processing and distribution technologies to exploit marine and inland water fishery resources. The activities of this sub–sector, conducted full–time or part–time, or just seasonally, are often targeted on supplying fish and fishery products to local and domestic markets, and for subsistence consumption"

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This toolkit has been produced by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) with funding from the European Union (EU). It provides technical guidance for practitioners working alongside small-scale fishing communities and seeking to empower them in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and more broadly working to secure sustainable, legal and ethical fisheries.

The toolkit consists of three pillars:

- community surveillance to detect and deter IUU fishing
- the development of fisheries co-management associations (CMAs) to promote the sustainable
- responsible management of fisheries and the strengthening of National Fishers Associations (NFAs) to assist them in leveraging improvements to national fisheries policy.

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Small-scale marine fisheries under threat

Small-scale marine fisheries are responsible for over a quarter of the global fish catch, totalling 25 million tonnes annually. They serve as vital sources of food and nutrition, and generate an estimated US $58 billion in total revenues at first sale.

However, these fisheries are under threat. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 38% of marine capture fisheries are overexploited, with catastrophic impacts on the food security, nutrition, economies, and well-being of whole segments of society. Coastal communities in the Global South are most acutely impacted by declining fish populations, with reduced catch being one of multiple interacting stressors including global heating, pollution and coastal land-use change. These factors, combined with a lack of alternative livelihood options, condemns millions to poverty and insecurity.

IUU fishing – and especially those practices that contravene fisheries laws, regulations or conservation and management measures – is a major threat to our oceans and the biodiversity they contain, with knock-on effects for coastal food security and livelihoods. IUU fishing accounts for one in every five fish caught, and costs the global economy billions annually. Furthermore, some IUU fishing practices, such as incursions by industrial vessels into areas designated for small-scale or semi-industrial fishers, directly endanger fishing communities as they expose small-scale fishers to high risks of collision that can lead to the destruction of fishing gear, injuries or even loss of life.

Preserving the rights of coastal communities to equitable and safe access to fish is of the utmost importance, particularly as small-scale fisheries are critical components of coastal economies, serving as a buffer against extreme poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and vulnerability. However fishing communities in the Global South have often been marginalised from fisheries governance, despite increasing evidence suggesting community involvement in the management of natural resources can often better achieve conservation goals as opposed to conventional top-down approaches.

Engaging small-scale marine fishing communities in fisheries governance

The involvement of fishing communities in the co-management of marine resources can have a wide range of benefits, from enhancing trust and social capital, to institution building and knowledge sharing. Participatory fisheries governance can constitute a variety of activities and roles, based on the context within which it occurs. These can include: community surveillance projects in which fishing communities monitor marine and coastal areas for IUU or destructive fishing practices, conflict resolution, the design and management of protected areas, advocating for issues that affect fishers at the local, regional, national and international levels, improvements to national policy and the capture of data related to ecosystem health.

Recognising the importance of engaging and involving coastal communities in fisheries management, EJF has worked over the past decade alongside communities in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal to support them in managing and regulating their fisheries at local and national levels. This has been achieved through training and capacity building, developing community surveillance programmes via the equipping of small–scale fishers with the technology and skills required to capture evidence of illegal fishing, and by increasing the participation of coastal communities in decision-making through setting up and strengthening community level fishers groups known as co-management associations (CMAs) and supporting the work of groups that represent small-scale fishers and fish processors at the national level known as national fishers associations (NFAs).

In light of this experience, and with funding from the EU, EJF has developed a toolkit for participatory fisheries governance, allowing these tried and tested approaches to effective and equitable management to be implemented across the Global South. Ultimately, the aim of the toolkit is to contribute to sustainable fisheries management and to improve food security, nutrition and livelihoods amongst coastal communities in the Global South.

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The development of the toolkit has three intended outcomes:

1) The establishment of effective community surveillance mechanisms for small-scale fishing communities helps deter, prevent and eliminate IUU fishing.
2) The promotion of community co-management associations results in more sustainable and responsible management and conservation of fisheries resources.
3) Strengthened national fishers associations leverage improvements to national policy resulting in small-scale fishing communities having more equitable access and tenure rights to well-managed fisheries resources.

The primary intended users of the toolkit are practitioners such as grassroots or international NGOs, consultants and branches of government who are working alongside small-scale marine fishing communities in the Global South, and are seeking to implement new, or strengthen existing, participatory governance schemes. It should however be of interest to fisheries stakeholders more broadly - including existing CMAs and NFAs - who would like to develop a better understanding of how communities can, and do, engage in fisheries management and in particular the fight against illegal fishing. The toolkit also contains resources that can be used by fishers directly, such as instructions on the use of community surveillance tools.

The toolkit provides theoretical and practical information around the relevant aspects of community surveillance and fisheries co-management, and includes key technical document templates, detailed guides, infographics, case studies and films. Beyond this core written document and accompanying online resources, EJF experts will deliver training and ongoing support through in-country engagement. Experience from this will inform the continued improvement of the toolkit in future versions, ensuring it is a living document that reflects best practice. The toolkit's implementation and iterations will be informed by the communities that use it, giving it both global reach and effective local application.

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Structure of the toolkit

This toolkit consists of three sections:

Section 1 provides information and resources to aid in the implementation of community surveillance projects as a means of detecting and reporting IUU and destructive fishing practices, including a guide on how to install and use EJF's 'DASE' app which has been developed to capture geo-located photo and video evidence at sea.

Section 2 provides information and resources to aid in the development and promotion of CMAs as vehicles for achieving legal, sustainable and equitable fisheries.

Section 3 provides information and resources to aid in the strengthening of NFAs that represent small-scale fishers and processors, through training in effective advocacy - drawing upon the well-established SMART Advocacy Cycle as a template.

Each section is designed to be useful in isolation, as well as a part of the wider toolkit. While all three are different strands of participatory governance, there are clear linkages between them in which one strand can bolster the others. For example, community surveillance programmes can provide useful data about the extent and nature of IUU fishing, which can inform the advocacy of NFAs, or shape the approach to IUU fishing taken by CMAs. Likewise, active and responsive CMAs can serve as reliable interlocutors for NFAs to disseminate information and best practices.

All of the above sections also include a range of resources that can be used during training and engagement with fishers and fishers groups. The global toolkit is designed to be a 'living' resource that will grow and evolve as additional resources become available, and as new or innovative best practices emerge. Its aim is to accurately reflect the experiences and contexts of small-scale fishers and their representatives globally, and as such we invite individuals or organisations – regardless of size or location – to submit information or resources they feel will contribute to its broader aims of giving voice to small-scale fishers, improving coastal livelihoods, protecting marine biodiversity and improving fisheries governance across scale.

If you would like to submit any such information or resources, please email globaltoolkit@ejfoundation.org.

Policy context of the toolkit

The content and approaches of this toolkit are both informed by, and will aid in the implementation of, the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) and the associated Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small–Scale Fisheries (VGSSF). The intended outcomes of the toolkit align closely with those of the VGGT and SSF Guidelines – i.e. contributing to improved food security and poverty eradication, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalised people, through responsible and equitable governance of resources.

The VGGT were unanimously endorsed on 11 May 2012 by the UN Committee on World Food Security. They are a range of best-practices that can inform and guide the work of governments, civil society actors and the private sector on how to promote responsible governance of tenure of fisheries resources. Tenure systems, as defined by the FAO, regulate "how people, communities and others gain access to natural resources, whether through formal law or informal arrangements" and "determine who can use which resources, for how long, and under what conditions". The VGGT are based on the central guiding principle of recognition and respect for all forms of legitimate tenure rights – including both those that are legitimated and recognised through law, as well as informal rights, legitimated through broad social acceptance even without legal recognition, such as customary rights on state land, or traditional fishing grounds not formally recognised by law.

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There are 10 principles of implementation that the VGGT considers fundamental to the responsible governance of tenure. These are: **human dignity, non-discrimination, equity and justice, gender equality, holistic and sustainable approach, consultation and participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability and continuous improvement**.

The VGSSF Guidelines are consistent with, and complementary to the VGGT, with a focus on responsible tenure specifically within the small-scale fishing industry. They are similarly the result of a substantive participatory and consultative process that directly involved more than 4,000 representatives of small-scale fishing communities, civil society actors, governments, regional organisations, and other stakeholders from more than 120 countries. They were endorsed by the 31st session of the FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2014 and recognise the key role played by small-scale fisheries in ensuring food security and eradicating poverty.

The VGSSF Guidelines take a human rights based approach, and similarly lay out guiding principles, which are: human rights and dignity, respect of cultures, non-discrimination, gender equality and equity, equity and equality, consultation and participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, economic, social and environmental sustainability, holistic and integrated approaches, social responsibility, and feasibility and social and economic viability.

SECTION ONE

COMMUNITY SURVEILLANCE AS A TOOL TO FIGHT IUU FISHING

1. Section overview

Section one of the toolkit provides information and resources for practitioners working alongside fishing communities who are seeking to set up their own community surveillance projects to detect and report IUU or destructive fishing, or those who would like to equip and train fishers on EJF's DASE app. It consists of four key components:

- An overview of what community surveillance is, how to use it effectively and its importance in the fight against IUU fishing;
- Challenges of community surveillance and how to overcome them;
- A guide to verifying and submitting evidence of suspected illegal or harmful fishing practices gathered through community surveillance;
- Introduction to EJF's DASE app, and technical advice on how to use it.

2. Introduction to community surveillance

2.1 What is community surveillance?

Within the context of this toolkit, community surveillance refers to the active participation of fishing communities and their representatives in identifying, documenting and reporting IUU fishing and other harmful activities that impact their livelihoods (e.g. damage to local fishing vessels or other fishing gear by industrial vessels).

2.2 What can be detected through community surveillance schemes?

Community surveillance schemes can be undertaken in order to detect a range of phenomena, such as illegal fishing, destructive fishing, and pollution. Within the context of this toolkit, it is predominantly aimed at detecting and reporting illegal fishing.

Illegal fishing can take many forms and whether a practice is deemed illegal will depend on the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern activities within a particular body of water. Some of these frameworks can often be found online, for example in the FAOLEX database or on the webpage of competent fishing authorities (such as a ministry for fisheries, or fisheries commission), and should be consulted if clarity is required as to whether IUU fishing has taken place.

Community surveillance is particularly useful at identifying IUU fishing in instances where industrial vessels are banned from fishing in certain areas - particularly when these prohibited areas overlap with the operating areas of small-scale fishers. Examples of these areas are marine protected areas (MPAs) that prohibit industrial fishing, and inshore exclusion zones (IEZs). Community surveillance may also be able to detect other forms of IUU or destructive fishing such as the use of improper gear, the dumping of fish overboard, shark finning and the damage of small-scale vessels or gear. Furthermore, community surveillance can gather evidence relevant to small-scale IUU fishing at landing beaches. This can include the presence of illegal gear (e.g. lights, explosives, noxious substances) or fishers heading to sea and/or landing catch during closed fishing seasons.

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2.3 In which situations might community surveillance be appropriate?

The varied nature of IUU fishing activities and the specific dynamics of the various global fisheries means that community surveillance will be more appropriate in some situations than in others. It is particularly applicable in coastal states:

- Where IUU fishing (either by industrial or small-scale vessels) is deemed a significant issue that frequently goes undetected and/or unpunished.
- In which small-scale fishers and industrial vessels find themselves operating in the same areas.
- That have limited state and/or civil society capacity or willingness to effectively address IUU or harmful fishing activities.
- Where frequent damage to small-scale fishing gear and vessels has been highlighted by community members - this often occurs as a result of illegal fishing by industrial vessels.

2.4 What are the benefits of community surveillance in addressing IUU fishing?

Gathering robust evidence of IUU fishing can be particularly challenging due to the opaque and remote nature of the industry, and can require a range of financial, technological and human resources that may not be readily available in affected countries. Furthermore, conventional monitoring methods for non-state actors, such as public vessel tracking platforms, are challenged by the ability of industrial vessels to 'go-dark' by turning off their satellite transmitters, allowing them to hide their illegal activities.

Engaging and equipping small-scale fishers with the tools to capture this evidence provides an opportunity to build capacity and counteract 'dark' vessels, with the group uniquely placed to document illegalities at sea. Community surveillance techniques often rely on low-cost and easily accessible technology and approaches, meaning they are well-suited in lower income countries in the Global South that often find themselves disproportionately affected by IUU fishing.

Although there has been limited research on the topic, it is also conceivable that community surveillance projects can not only detect IUU fishing, but also deter it, particularly when they are well publicised locally and nationally. For example, both Guinea and Sierra Leone reportedly saw significant reductions in illegal fishing linked to the presence of community surveillance projects.

2.5 What evidence should be captured for effective community surveillance?

If administrative or legal action is going to be taken against a vessel, it is important that fishers are aware of the specific information they should try to capture to ensure that as strong a case as possible can be put together:

- **Information on the vessel's identity**: Fishers should try to ensure that any photos or videos show as much information about the identity of the vessel as possible, including where relevant its name, call sign and any other vessel identifiers (such as those issued by the International Maritime Organization known as 'IMO' numbers) - more information on these identifiers can be found in the additional resources section, including TMT and Stop Illegal Fishing's 'Photo Manual for Fisheries Enforcement'.
- **Location data**: Recording the coordinates where the vessel is located can be relevant, particularly when it is suspected of fishing without authorisation in a prohibited area.
- **Proof that the vessel is fishing:** In most cases, it is important that photo or video evidence of IUU fishing also shows that the vessel is actively fishing, as opposed to being in transit (i.e. travelling to port, or another fishing ground). To do so, fishers should try to show that the vessel's nets or gear are submerged in the water, or to capture images or video of fish being hauled onto the boat.

In order to achieve the above, fishers may have to get relatively close to the vessel in question. However, it is important that they remain a safe distance away so as to avoid any risk of a collision and to ensure that they can leave safely should they experience any hostility.

3. What are the challenges of community surveillance, and how can they be overcome?

3.1 Securing coastal state government buy-in

Some countries do not have rules and bodies for implementing and supervising community surveillance projects, which can potentially create barriers to rolling them out, and lead to friction between implementing non-governmental organisations and the relevant government authorities. It is also possible that certain coastal state governments may object to communities being involved in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) programmes as such activities generally fall within the mandate of the national fisheries authority. This may be a particular challenge where the role of communities or third parties in gathering and submitting evidence is not yet recognised in relevant national legal or policy frameworks.

Furthermore, coastal state authorities may be reluctant to investigate information submitted via community surveillance for a number of reasons. These may include, among others, low levels of political will to take enforcement action with respect to IUU fishing, a lack of enforcement capacity, the involvement of powerful local or international actors within the fisheries sector, a mistrust of information submitted by third parties, and a lack of accountability or oversight of fisheries monitoring and enforcement.

Ensuring that community surveillance programmes are legal, transparent, and engage relevant authorities from an early stage are all means of addressing the above challenges, as well as ensuring participants understand the scope and jurisdiction of the project. This can be achieved through a range of approaches, including holding meetings and stakeholder events to showcase the programme to obtain and integrate feedback, and enabling access to the data retrieved through the app (while taking precautions to preserve the anonymity of those submitting evidence). Beyond this, local or national governments can participate in the capturing of evidence as well as, or alongside, fishers. In Senegal, for example, community surveillance is conducted via joint surveillance teams, which include members of the local artisanal fishing councils and staff of the coastal surveillance stations, who are local government officials.

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3.2 Lack of community uptake

Finding motivated fishers to engage in community surveillance and ensuring that they continue to engage with projects is a challenging but pivotal component. In the case of community surveillance methods that require a smartphone app, fishers may be hesitant to take personal phones to sea in case of loss or damage.

In order to address this understandable concern, EJF has trialled a number of approaches with varying degrees of success. These options can be considered when deploying the DASE app, although the most appropriate or acceptable solution will likely depend on the local context and resources available:

- Issue waterproof plastic phone holders to fishers participating in the community surveillance project to protect phones from water damage or loss at sea.

- Provide fishers with smartphones with the DASE app already installed. This can be an expensive approach and there is a risk of phones being damaged, lost or stolen. EJF found this approach works best with trusted fishers with whom a strong relationship has already been built. However, fishers can still be reluctant to take phones to sea or may lend phones out for personal use by friends or family members rather than for surveillance activities.

- Distribute geo-tagged digital cameras alongside the deployment of the mobile app. Geo-tagged cameras are often more robust than phones, simpler to operate, cheaper and less likely to be subject to theft. Distributing these cameras however comes with considerable cost and will likely require regular meetings with fishers in order to collect memory cards and upload the data – meaning they are best suited to be distributed in communities in proximity to the organisation deploying cameras.

Low literacy rates may present a barrier to the use of some technologies and needs to be considered in the design and rolling-out of community surveillance tools, ensuring they are intuitive to use and thorough training is conducted. If possible, ensure that tools can be adapted to local dialects or can use symbols.

Fishers may also become demotivated over time if competent authorities fail to take enforcement action in response to evidence submitted on illegal activities, if they have technical issues or if they do not feel supported by the organisation that has recruited them for community surveillance. With this in mind, ongoing engagement with communities beyond the initial deployment phase is vital. This support is not only essential for those collecting evidence at sea, but can also help the implementing organisation to better understand the behavioural and technological factors that determine uptake and continued engagement.

3.3 Safety risks to fishers

IUU fishing is increasingly recognised as a transnational criminal issue, closely aligned in some instances with corruption, labour abuses and human trafficking and linked to global criminal networks. As such, there are risks associated with documenting IUU fishing at sea, including hostility from crewmembers of suspected illegal fishing vessels, that must be acknowledged and mitigated. In Senegal, small-scale fishers have reported being sprayed with boiling water when trying to confront industrial vessels over the destruction of their fishing gear.

Safety training is therefore vitally important (a range of resources are available online on safety at sea, e.g. 'Safety at sea for small-scale fishers' produced by the FAO). Fishers should be advised to avoid confrontation at all costs and to maintain a safe distance from vessels when engaging in surveillance. They should also be trained on how to spot and react to aggression to ensure their safety. It is also important that community surveillance projects do not financially incentivise risk behaviours – for example by offering money for images of vessels, or money for evidence of IUU fishing more broadly.

4. How can data collected through community surveillance be used?

This section of the toolkit will now discuss what can be done with evidence collected through community surveillance, so as to improve the chances of vessels suspected of IUU fishing being identified and ultimately sanctioned.

Many of the steps suggested will require significant human and technical resources. As such this section is aimed predominantly at organisations that are working with and supporting fishers and may be interested in developing a community surveillance scheme similar to that of the DASE app, or who are working with fishers using the DASE app.

4.1 Verification of data collected via community surveillance

Evidence generated through community surveillance should, where possible, be verified against multiple data sources before being shared with the relevant authorities for follow up and possible enforcement action. This helps to ensure that the data is genuinely depicting potentially illegal or otherwise harmful behaviour and thus maintain the legitimacy and credibility of data submitted via community surveillance.

Tools available for the verification of data received from fishers include the following:

- **Simple, free-to-use mapping tools such as Google Earth**. These are particularly relevant for offences related to fishing in prohibited zones such as marine protected areas (MPAs) and IEZs. For example, if an industrial vessel is suspected to have been fishing illegally within an IEZ reserved for small-scale fishers, users can plot the vessel's coordinates (if available, for example if they have been collected via the DASE app) in Google Earth and use the distance measuring function to gauge how far the vessel was from shore, providing a better indication of whether an infraction may have taken place. It is also possible to import boundaries into Google Earth and similar software, such as the boundaries of an MPA where certain types of fishing activity are prohibited, or the boundary of an IEZ. Google Earth is downloadable here, and a user guide can be found here.

- **Vessel tracking platforms**. This includes those that are free (such as Global Fishing Watch) and those that are pay-to-access (such as the Spire Shipview platform and Starboard.nz). These platforms allow for the near real-time monitoring of fishing vessels and can be used to corroborate images and location data shared by fishers. Vessel tracking software can be used in conjunction with Google Earth. A vessel's tracks can be downloaded from most platforms (e.g. as a .kml file), imported into Google Earth and mapped against the coordinates submitted by fishers. For example, if a photographed industrial vessel turns off its location tracker in close proximity to a protected area, this may serve as further evidence of risk behaviour.

- **Verification against lists of licences or authorisations published by the relevant flag or coastal state.** These can assist in determining whether the fishing activity identified through community surveillance is authorised by the competent authorities. It can also be useful to help confirm a vessel's identity where vessel markings in reported images are unclear, as well as the type of vessel and target species. Some government authorities publish data on vessels licensed to fish within their waters or authorised to fish under their flag, however this information is often not up to date, or is published on an ad hoc basis, if at all. Ghana, for example, has, in the past, published lists of tuna and trawl vessels, as well as semi-industrial vessels, licensed to fish within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). In Senegal, after five years of collaborative efforts from national and international civil society organisations, including EJF, the authorities have published the list of industrial vessels authorised to fish in the country's waters. The most comprehensive vessel records are often available via regional fisheries management organisation (RFMOs) (see, for example, the IOTC and ICCAT list of authorised vessels), although these will only be relevant where fishing activities fall within the relevant RFMO's mandate (e.g. fishing for tuna or tuna-like species). The FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels can also be consulted to assist in verifications, including confirmation of vessel name, unique vessel identifiers, and flag state.

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4.2 Compiling data and sharing with relevant authorities

If, having conducted the above verifications, it appears that the evidence submitted by fishers is indicative of potential illegal fishing, the next step is to compile it alongside any other relevant information before it is shared with the authorities. EJF shares this information in Vessel Activity Notifications (also referred to as 'IUU Alerts') and submits these bilaterally with the competent authorities for follow up and potential enforcement action (see the Additional Resources section for examples).

The following information, where available, should be included in such notifications:

a. Details of the vessel's ownership - where possible identifying the companies associated with its operations, flag and other identifying information (e.g. name, call sign, MMSI, IMO number).
b. A detailed written description of the vessel's behaviours including dates, locations and times, and why they are suspected to be illegal, with, where possible, reference to applicable laws that may have been breached.
c. Copies of the images captured through community surveillance (being cautious not to share any information that may reveal the fisher's identity), as well as other relevant diagrams or images, such as screenshots of the vessel's tracks in Global Fishing Watch or Google Earth and measurements showing distance from shore, as well as downloadable spreadsheets that show exact coordinates, dates, fishing speeds and any other relevant information.
d. Information on the vessel's potential supply chain. Obtaining accurate information on the supply chains of fishing vessels is challenging as a result of the opaque nature of the industry. However, open-source intelligence is sometimes available online that can indicate where a vessel's catch is potentially going. For example, DG SANTE (the department of the European Commission responsible for policy on food safety and health in the EU) publishes a list of non-EU establishments authorised to export to the EU which can include the names of fishing vessels. While a vessel's presence on this list is not concrete evidence that there is an active supply chain, it can be an indicator of trade between a particular vessel and the EU. In some instances, larger retailers may publish details of the vessels that supply them, and/or larger fishing companies may publish details of who they supply. For example, EJF was able to obtain detailed information on the supply chain of the Zhejiang Ocean Family, one of China's biggest tuna companies, based on information provided in a prospectus prepared for its Initial Public Offering (IPO). The use of vessel tracking software can also be a good indicator of where a vessel's catch is going. Tools such as trans-shipment algorithms, that identify instances of fish being transferred at sea to collection vessels, can allow users to follow the collection vessel back to major seafood markets. However, again, users must be conscious of the inherent limitations of this method given it relies on satellite data as opposed to hard evidence of fish being traded globally.
e. Any other information that might assist the authorities in their investigation (e.g. previous illegal behaviours of the vessel or fleet, other risk behaviours of the vessel that were identified through vessel tracks).

Once the data, along with the above relevant information, has been compiled and verified, it is ready to share with the relevant authorities. Depending on the nature of the evidence submitted and potential infraction, the recipient(s) of evidence may include the competent authorities of: (i) the vessel's flag state, (ii) the coastal state in whose waters the vessel was fishing, (iii) the port state(s) visited by the vessel, or any vessel that it is suspected of having trans-shipped with, and/or (iv) the market state which was the final destination of the seafood. Evidence may also be submitted to regional or international organisations, such as the RFMOs with jurisdiction over the geographical area or species/fishery concerned, or the European Commission if there may have been a breach of EU legislation. Common examples include EU import controls aimed at preventing the entry of seafood stemming from IUU fishing into the EU market, or if information is relevant to bilateral dialogues between the Commission and third countries under the EU's IUU Regulations.

It is worth identifying the appropriate divisions and individuals to whom the information will be of interest, either through web searches, or on the advice of local in-country partners where applicable. This may include, for example, officials at the ministry for fisheries, fisheries authority and/or maritime authority, and departments responsible for MCS.

When submitting data to any of the above recipients, organisations should be cautious about the language they are using when describing the vessel's activities, and similarly about how and when they publish any details of alleged offences (for example in reports, news outlets, webpages) so as to avoid any legal repercussions. The use of cautious language, such as 'reported to be' and 'displaying behaviours often linked to IUU fishing' is advisable.

5. The DASE app

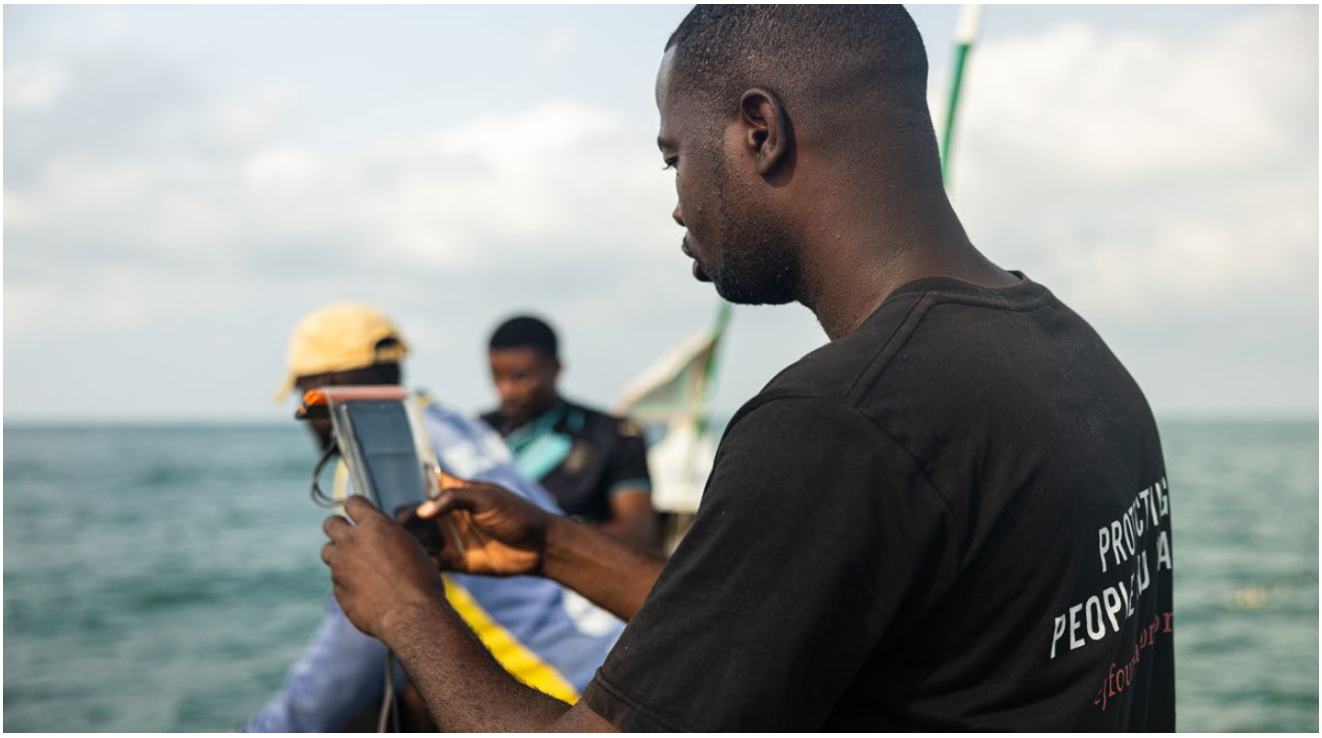
5.1 What is the DASE app?

The DASE (pronounced 'DAH-SEE') app, which means 'evidence' in Ghana's local Fante language – is EJF's bespoke simple, user-friendly mobile phone app that enables fishers to capture geo-located photographic and video evidence of IUU fishing. Evidence submitted is stored in a secure centralised database and verified by EJF experts. Where instances of suspected IUU fishing are identified, the evidence is submitted to the competent authorities, alongside additional relevant information on the vessel's identity, ownership and behaviours.

The app is available for Android phones, and is based on the KoboToolbox data collection software. KoboToolbox is designed specifically for use by civil society and humanitarian organisations operating globally in complex and remote environments. As such, it allows for adaptation to local languages, requires little storage and can be used even when there is limited or no internet connection, simply uploading information once internet connection is available.

The app is predominantly designed for use by artisanal fishers to identify incursions by industrial fishing vessels into IEZs; however, it can be used to document a range of coastal threats, including artisanal IUU fishing, pollution, coastal erosion and illegal developments.

To date, the DASE app has been rolled out in four countries in West and Central Africa, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal and most recently Cameroon, engaging hundreds of small-scale fishers in the fight against IUU fishing. Whilst the core principles and technologies associated with the app remain the same, the approach taken to deploying the app has been adapted to each local context, taking into consideration existing institutions working in artisanal fishing communities and the dynamics of the industrial and small-scale fleets, among other factors. In Senegal, a Whatsapp group has also been formed with the users of the app to share challenges and experiences. In 2023, nearly 850 reports were submitted during joint patrols by the surveillance teams in Senegal, which included sightings of an industrial vessel suspected to be fishing in the artisanal fishing zone and of juvenile (under-sized) fish at the landing sites. Anecdotal evidence suggests a range of benefits associated with the scheme, such as fishing permits being paid more often and safety jackets being used with increased frequency. In Liberia and Cameroon, the app is installed on fisher's smartphones and on those donated to community-based co-management associations (CMAs) or similar structures for safe-keeping. For the latter, the CMAs are then charged with loaning the phones out to fishers for use when they go out to sea.



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CASE STUDY: Launching the DASE app in Ghana

The coast of Ghana is home to over 200 fishing communities, who have relied on the oceans for generations to support their livelihoods and food security. Today, it is believed that as many as 2.6 million people along the value chain rely on fisheries in the country. However, declining fish populations and the associated scarcity of locally important fish species such as sardinella have condemned many fishers to a cycle of poverty and insecurity.

IUU fishing has been a significant driver of fish population decline, and has blighted Ghanaian waters for decades. Through engaging with crew on industrial vessels and affected fishing communities, EJF found that one of the most directly harmful forms of IUU fishing in the country was the illegal encroachment of trawlers into Ghana's six nautical mile IEZ, which often led to canoe fishers' nets being ensnared in industrial gear, creating huge financial burdens through lost catch and repair. A 2022 study by EJF found that, of the 36 industrial crew interviewed, 81% had witnessed their vessel illegally enter the IEZ, often occurring at night with the vessels' lights turned off. Another recent EJF study found that almost 75% of respondent small-scale fishers said that they encountered industrial vessels more frequently than five years ago, with 70% saying they had suffered damaged nets as a result. Fishers were able to obtain compensation in less than 15% of instances where nets were damaged, further exacerbating their financial woes.

To enable better detection and deterrence of these incursions, EJF began the process of designing and rolling out the DASE app. Over the course of 2019, EJF engaged over 700 fishers across 48 communities in Ghana's Central Region, in collaboration with the government's Fisheries Commission. Fishers and government officials were trained on how to use the app and their suggestions and feedback helped to optimise it. Fishers received extensive training from EJF and in-country partners as well as the Fisheries Commission. This included information on the boundaries of the IEZ, and the Commission's processes through which fishers can claim compensation. The app had an early success when in late 2019, an industrial trawler was caught allegedly fishing within the IEZ, with evidence submitted to Ghana's Fisheries Commission.

Now, years into the project, the app continues to evolve and adapt to better suit the needs of fishers and to reflect the practical and behavioural realities of community surveillance in the country. This has included distributing plastic wallets to preserve phones, the use of digital cameras alongside the app and extensive internal reflections within the organisation on how to motivate fishers to safely and effectively participate. EJF's community officers continually engage with fishers, providing ongoing troubleshooting and support, and talking to fishers to understand if, how and when they are using the app and any challenges they face.

While the app had been deployed widely across the coast, it became clear that only a relatively small subset of fishers were actively using the app during their fishing expeditions. To address this issue, EJF initiated a 'DASE champions' model, working with a small number of trusted and more active fishers to undertake community surveillance with a view to gathering actionable evidence for enforcement purposes. The aim is to gather success stories on the use of the app and encourage a wider pool of fishers to engage in the project at a later stage. The app has also been deployed through existing institutional structures, leveraging the trust and knowledge base of community-based enforcement committees at each landing beach.

The DASE app has recently been adapted in Ghana to monitor sea turtle conservation and shark fisheries and has further potential to gather information on other pressures faced by coastal communities, including mangrove loss and environmental harm caused by extractive industries.

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5.2 How to download and install the DASE app

The DASE app runs on the KoboToolbox software, which is available on phones that use the Android operating system. In order to record and report evidence using the app, you will need to be allocated a username and password by EJF, which can be requested at the following link, or by sending an email containing the name of the person requesting the user and their contact number/email, the name of the individual who will be using the app, their location (country and town) and telephone number to toolkit@ejfoundation.org. After this, the process to download and install the app is as follows:

1. In the application centre of your Android phone (e.g. Google Play), search for and download the 'KoboCollect' app.

2. Open the KoboCollect app on your phone, and click the option to manually enter project details.

3. Users will be prompted to enter a URL, username and password. In the URL box enter the following address: https://kc.kobotoolbox.org. Enter the username and password assigned to you by EJF.

4. Once logged in, click on the 'download form' tab.

5. In the download form tab, the user should see one or more forms that they can download, which should reflect their location. For example, a new user in Ghana will have the option to download a form called 'DASE-Ghana'. If not already selected, click on the box on the right of the screen so that a blue tick appears then click 'Get Selected' at the bottom right of the page to download it.

6. Users are now ready to capture and submit evidence using the DASE app.

5.3 How to capture and submit evidence with the DASE app

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When fishers are at sea, and believe that a vessel is engaging in illegal or destructive activity, they should do the following when a safe distance away from the vessel:

1. Open the KoboCollect app.

2. Click on the 'Start new form' tab.

3. Click on the form that you have previously downloaded, that should be called 'DASE [followed by the country or region you are in]'.

4. Click on the 'Take picture' tab. Note: Users may receive the following prompt 'Allow KoboCollect to take pictures and record video' - to which they should click 'While using the app'.

5. Users should then take a photo of the vessel, trying to show as much identificatory information (such as the name, call sign etc.) as possible, and trying to show that the vessel is currently fishing. If the photo is not of a good quality, users can click 'Retry' to capture another. Once satisfied, users can click the 'Next' tab in the bottom right corner of the screen.

6. Users should then be prompted to 'Record your current location'. To do so, click on the 'Start GeoPoint' tab.

7. Especially when at sea, it may take some time for the location accuracy to improve. Once it reaches 5 m accuracy, the location will be saved. If it is struggling to reach this, users may need to save manually but should wait until the accuracy reaches its lowest point (ideally below 10 m). Once the location has been recorded, click the 'next' tab at the bottom right of the screen.

8. Finally users will be prompted to 'Use the camera to record a video' (optional). To do so, click on the 'Record video' tab.

9. Users should record a video of the vessel, again capturing the important information highlighted in Section 2.5. Once happy with the video, users should click the 'Next' tab at the bottom right of the screen.

10. This will signal the last step of the form. If users are happy with the information they have captured, they should click the blue 'Finalize' tab.

11. Users will be returned to the home screen and should click on the 'Ready to send' tab.

12. The submission that they have captured should be within this folder. Users should click the box on the right hand side of the screen next to the submission so that a blue tick appears, and then click on the 'Send Selected' tab at the bottom right of the screen

13. Once uploaded, a box should appear saying 'Upload Results' with the name of the folder followed by 'Successful Submission'. Press 'Okay', and the process has been completed.

14. Users can repeat this process as many times as they need for a given sighting of a vessel.

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6. Additional Resources

Resource	Description
Example of Vessel Alert Notification generated by EJF using data collected from the DASE app in Senegal	This vessel alert notification details the activities of a trawler suspected of fishing in Senegal's territorial sea, as evidenced through the DASE app. It demonstrates the structure used when alerting relevant authorities, including the vessel's identity, activities, legal provisions and recommendations.
Example of Vessel Alert Notification generated by EJF using evidence collected at sea in Cameroon	This vessel alert notification details the activities of a trawler suspected of fishing in Cameroon's Douala-Edéa National Park, as evidenced through the DASE app. It demonstrates the structure used when alerting relevant authorities, including the vessel's identity, activities, legal provisions and recommendations.
Guidebook - How to download, install and submit evidence of illegal fishing via the DASE app	This presentation will provide a step-by-step guide showing how fishers and their representatives can download and use the DASE app.
Dos and Don'ts - Capturing high-quality evidence of illegal or destructive fishing behaviour using community surveillance	A list of key things to remember when capturing high-quality evidence of illegal or destructive fishing behaviour using community surveillance. The list is compiled from information throughout the toolkit, summarising crucial information points.
The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels	This resource, compiled by the UN FAO, provides certified data from state authorities about vessels and vessel-related activities. The record shows the number of vessels from each global region, and provides links to all RFMO IUU lists. This could be useful to check if the suspected vessel identified by community surveillance has been flagged as IUU previously.
The Global Fishing Watch Interactive Vessel Tracking Map	Global Fishing Watch is the first open-access online platform for visualisation and analysis of vessel-based human activity at sea. It uses satellite technology and machine learning to show almost near-time fishing activity for about 70,000 commercial fishing vessels and has data accessible dating back to 2012. It can be used to verify information received through community surveillance by tracking the relevant vessel tracks at the time the suspected infraction occurred. It is able to show any patterns or trajectories of the vessel, and confirm whether fishing activities took place within a prohibited area.
FAO - Safety at sea for small-scale fishers	This FAO safety manual is primarily for small-scale fishers who use vessels of less than 12 metres in length, but are useful for those up to 20 metres. It details general and personal safety on board. The manual is simple and instructive, and designed for best accessibility.

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TMT and Stop Illegal Fishing - Photo Manual for Fisheries Enforcement: the use of cameras in fisheries operations	This guide demonstrates how to use photography and analysis of vessel photographs to aid fisheries enforcement. Available in both English and French, the manual includes practical information on setting up cameras and taking good vessel photographs, guidelines on storage and use of photographs, key pointers for vessel photo analysis and a number of case studies illustrating how vessel photographs have been used to uncover cases of illegal fishing. This is a useful guide for any fisher, new or existing, taking part in a community surveillance programme.
Google Earth (download)	Google Earth is a detailed and interactive world map that allows geo-spatial analysis, and lets users plot locations, measure distances and a range of other useful tools. It can be used to verify information received through community surveillance by plotting coordinates provided by fishers and confirming whether fishing activities had taken place within a prohibited area.
Google Earth (user guide)	This Google Earth User Guide is an in-depth, user-friendly guide demonstrating the key functions of Google Earth. It provides a number of step-by-step instructions, including on how to change the language, finding places, and measuring distances and areas - all of which are useful for verifying community surveillance.

SECTION TWO

FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS

1. Section overview

Section two of the toolkit provides information and resources for practitioners working alongside fishing communities who are seeking to set up co-management associations (CMAs) within small-scale marine fishing communities, and/or looking to engage CMAs in the fight against IUU fishing. It consists of three key components:

- An introduction to the concept of a CMA, including key information on how they can improve the lives of small-scale fishing communities and how they can be formed;
- An overview of the challenges faced while forming and running CMAs, and how these challenges can be overcome;
- A guide to how CMAs can be vehicles for the identification and prevention of industrial and artisanal IUU fishing.

2. Introduction to fisheries CMAs

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2.1 What is fisheries co-management?

Fisheries co-management has been defined by the FAO as "a mode of governance through which resource users' and government share responsibility and authority for the management of fishery resources, with support and assistance as needed from other stakeholders, external agents, academic and research institutions". As an approach, it can be arranged in a number of ways (see below table), and can occur at different scales – for example relating to a specific fishery, gear type or community. It can involve a range of activities including the detection and prevention of IUU fishing, conflict resolution and management of protected areas. It can give fishing communities a voice by connecting local actors with those at the local, regional, national and international level to raise concerns about the various pressures placed on coastal livelihoods.

Types of fisheries co-management

Type of fisheries co-management	Definition
Instructive	A mechanism exists for dialogue with user-groups/fishing communities but the process itself tends to be the government informing fishers on the decisions they plan to make.
Consultative	Institutional structures for government to consult with user-groups/ fishing communities exist, but all decisions are taken by government
Cooperative	Government and user-groups/fishing communities cooperate together as equal partners in decision-making
Delegated	Management authority is delegated to user-groups/fishing communities and the government is informed of decisions taken.

Source: Sen & Nielsen, 1996

2.2 What are fisheries CMAs?

Fisheries CMAs are formalised community groups that contribute to the management of fisheries, often in partnership with local, regional and/or national governments. They can serve as reliable touchpoints both for those in their community who are keen to engage in or have concerns about co-management activities, and also for relevant bodies and authorities within and outside of the community, facilitating constructive engagement and, where necessary, conflict resolution.

2.3 What role can CMAs play in improving the lives of small-scale fishing communities?

CMAs are a prerequisite for the active, effective, informed, meaningful and inclusive participation of fishing communities in decision-making processes, consistent with the principles of implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small–Scale Fisheries (VGSSF) Guidelines. They are also vehicles for strengthening the capacity and operations of small-scale fishing and coastal communities, with the ability to galvanise collective action to ensure political representation, and promoting cooperation between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, which are key objectives of the VGGT. More broadly, participatory co-management remains the most efficient decentralised approach to improving sustainability and social equity in small-scale fisheries.

CMAs can contribute to legal and sustainable oceans through developing, enforcing, monitoring and raising awareness of management measures amongst small-scale fishing communities. This aligns with the principles set out in the VGGT, which state that people whose tenure rights are recognised or who are allocated new rights should have full knowledge of their rights and duties. Such measures may include closed fishing seasons, marine protected areas, and bans on particular types of gear or fishing methods. CMAs are also well-placed to reduce IUU fishing within both the industrial and small-scale sector as part of the overall management of coastal fisheries. This will lead to healthier fish populations and sustain the food security, nutrition and livelihoods of those who depend on them.

2.4 How can a CMA be formed?

It is important to identify existing local management structures in the community, and where feasible, use existing local approaches to co-management. Surveys of communities and relevant people should help to identify the most suitable community and professional organisations to serve as operational partners in the CMA. There should also be opportunities for inception meetings, one-to-one engagements, wider community discussions, and baseline feasibility studies with local leaders and fishing community heads before forming a CMA, to ensure that the institution meets the needs of the specific community. Practitioners should also support the CMA committee to engage the relevant authorities to register the co-management group as an organisation representing fishers, processors and the other members of the small-scale fishing communities, where applicable.

2.5 How can leadership for a CMA be selected?

External entities often support the formation of an interim CMA formation committee (ICFC), which includes the nomination of representatives from each section of the fishing community and the election of a chair.The entity will also support the formation of a CMA constitution committee and election committee, including the process of drafting a constitution and holding leadership elections (an example constitution can be found in the additional resources here). When establishing leadership within a CMA, the core principles of VGGT must be taken into consideration, including respect for tenure rights, gender equality, sustainable resource management, transparency, stakeholder inclusion, conflict resolution, and accountability. This will focus elections on effective and democratic leadership. This is important, as an emphasis on simply increasing membership can neglect crucial components such as membership regulations, formal structures with assigned roles and responsibilities, and term limits for officeholders.

2.6 How are decisions made in a CMA?

The CMA is governed by a constitution and functions through mass participation and elected leadership. Its aim is to improve the living standard of the coastal communities through capacity development and proper management of the fisheries resources in collaboration with local authorities, national bodies and other partners where applicable. Through the CMA, all segments of the fishing communities are brought together and given the opportunity to participate in matters that affect their livelihoods as a segment and community as a whole.

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CASE STUDY: fisheries co-management in Mozambique - the Artisanal Fisheries and Climate Change (FishCC) Project

1. Background

While fisheries co-management in Mozambique has existed for around thirty years in the form of Community Fisheries Councils (*Conselhos Comunitários de Pesca* or CCPs), these entities only gained adequate legal recognition in 2020. International organisations have made attempts to strengthen the country's fisheries co-management infrastructure, such as through the World Bank's Artisanal Fisheries and Climate Change (FishCC) Project. However, projects such as FishCC have only seen limited success. In order for successful co-management, Mozambique's government must strengthen CCP funding.

Since the mid-1990s, the co-management of fisheries in Mozambique has centred around the creation of CCPs, which allow local fishing communities to play a wider role in the governance of fisheries. While historically loosely defined in legislation, the role of these CCPs in fisheries co-management in the country was set out in a template for CCP statutes published by the former Ministry of Fisheries in 2006 which consolidated their objectives into four categories:

Table 1: The objectives of CCPs in the 2006 template for CCP statutes

Fundamental objective	**Contribute to the preservation of marine and coastal ecosystems**
Fisheries management	• Encourage and recommend fisheries licensing • Alert Fisheries Administration authorities to changes to fisheries resources or the environmental in their area
Complementing management measures	• Undertake surveillance and licensing • Collaborate in controlling marine & coastal pollution • Participate in implementation of mechanisms to restrict fishing
Harmonisation of interest	• Establish conflict resolution mechanisms between artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial fishers, through mediation • Promote adequate marking of fishing gear
Fisheries extension	• Promote community education and awareness on the need for protection of the marine environment • Participate in collection information on fisheries activities, in training and in recycling

Source: World Bank (2019)

Since 2010, the role and legal status of CCPs has been further refined and strengthened, including through the Maritime Fisheries Regulation 2020 (REPMAR) and the updated CCP statutes template produced by the Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries (MIMAIP) in 2022 (see **Table 2**).

The Mozambican government has pursued co-management as a fisheries management strategy in recent decades in order to deal with overfishing, resolve local conflicts between fisheries resource users, defend local communities' preferential rights of access to resources, and eliminate harmful fishing practices and environmental degradation. The recent legislative updates show the ongoing importance of co-management in the country's overarching fisheries management strategy.

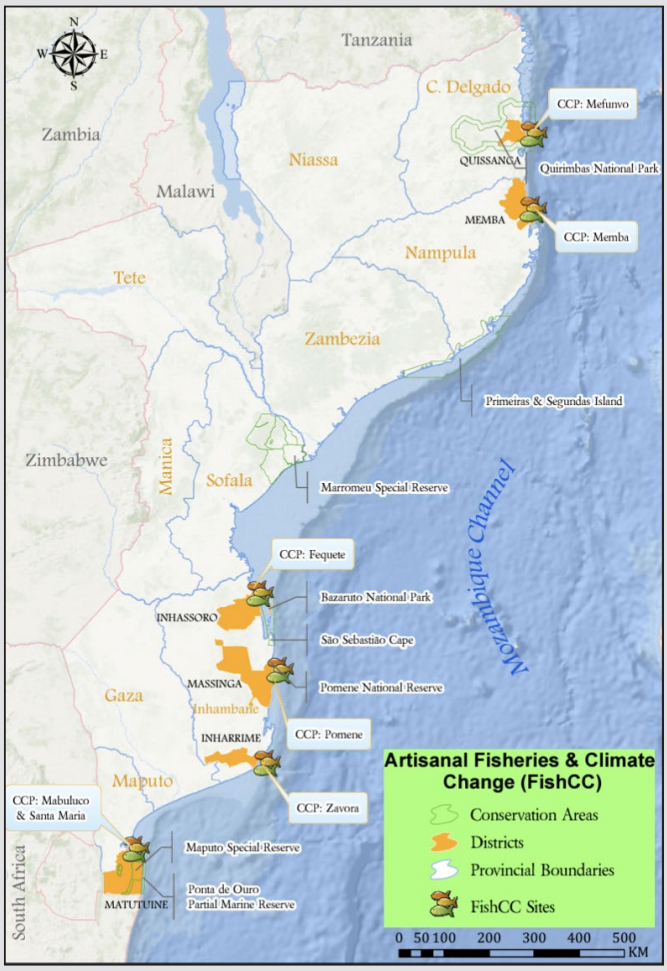
2. Project scope: The Artisanal Fisheries and Climate Change (FishCC) Project

Between April 2015 and April 2019, the FishCC Project was implemented in Mozambique by Ministério do Mar, Águas Interiores e Pescas (MIMAIP), with support from Rare, an international NGO, as well as various provincial and district authorities. Funding for the FishCC project was provided by the Nordic Development Fund, and was administered by the World Bank.

The FishCC Project aimed to build on the work completed by previous government-led artisanal fisheries projects such as the Artisanal Fishing and Co-Management Project (PPACG) and the Artisanal Fishermen's Resource Rights Project (ProDIRPA), in order to "improve community management of selected priority fisheries". The project's core objective was to transform the management of coastal artisanal fisheries in Mozambique through the adaptation and piloting of "Fish Forever", a community rights-based fisheries management model developed by Rare (see **Box 1**). By increasing the sustainability of these fisheries, the FishCC Project sought to improve the resilience and adaptive capacity of coastal community livelihoods in the country in the face of the impact of climate change.

Six sites already possessing at least one functioning CCP across the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Inhambane and Maputo were selected for the implementation of FishCC. Two sites - Mefunvo, located in Cabo Delgado, and Machangulo, in Maputo - were located in protected areas designated under the Mozambican Conservation Law of 2013.

Figure 1: Map of CCPs included in the FishCC project. *Source*: World Bank, 2019



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3. Achievements and challenges

The FishCC Project consisted of three components across its six project areas:

a. Improvement of community rights-based fisheries management
b. Improvement of livelihoods
c. Support of capacity-building and community engagement necessary for the development and implementation of a social marketing approach to fisheries co-management

While the project was hindered by a number of factors - most notably the reorganisation of the Ministry of Fisheries shortly after the beginning of the project in 2015 and the lack of a legal framework for creating community management areas in the country - some significant outcomes were achieved. At all six FishCC sites, CCPs were able to define and map management area boundaries. Fisheries no-take reserves were agreed in principle, but were crucially not fully designated and demarcated in any site. Alongside these proposed reserves, a number of other priority fisheries management measures were agreed, as displayed in **Table 2**:

Table 2: Agreed priority management measures across the six FishCC CCPs

	Mefunvo	Memba	Fequete	Pomenae	Zavora	Macangulo
Priority management measures	All beachseine fishers to switch to gillnets or handlines	Implement fisheries no-take reserve & reduce use of mosquito nets	Beachseine fishers to observe two closed seasons totalling 5 months	Eliminate spear-fishing and implement fisheries no-take reserve	Reduce or eliminate spear-fishing and implement 3 no-take reserves	Implement fisheries no-take reserve in Bembi estuary

Source: World Bank (2019)

However, the project's key achievement was that the experience gained through the development of CCPs in FishCC sites aided decision-making in MIMAIP's revision of the legal framework for the designation of community fisheries management areas. This led to the adoption of the new Marine Fisheries Regulation (REPMAR) legislation in 2020, which not only clarifies the path to official recognition for CCPs, but also mandates these organisations as the main bodies responsible for the management of local fisheries. The legislation also contains a provision which explicitly allows for the creation of "co-management agreements with [...] Community Fishing Councils [CCPs] or other community-based organisations, to share responsibilities within the framework of participatory management of fishing resources".

4. Next steps

Looking forward, the formal government recognition of CCPs under this new legislation has enabled the growth of further co-management arrangements across the country. This includes, for example, the CCP founded in Cabaceira Pequena in 2022, which through the education of community members on sustainable fisheries management, has successfully adopted new temporary fishery closures that have led to increased catch during the open fishing season. However, interviews with CCP members carried out near the port city of Beira in January 2024 revealed severely limited funding for such organisations from the central government. Going forward, it is essential that the Mozambican government provides adequate funding to CCPs and other fisheries management organisations. In particular, it must make sure to use revenue from industrial fishing licences for this purpose, meeting its obligations outlined in Article 46 of the 2017 Regulation for the Concession of Fishing Rights and Fishing Licensing.

3. What are the challenges of setting up and running a CMA, and how can they be overcome?

3.1 Lack of interest or capacity of community members to form a CMA

One of the major challenges of forming a CMA is a lack of interest or capacity of members to engage in the formation of a collaborative management structure. Competing interests, a lack of remuneration, disagreement over priorities, conflicts over resource management and hesitation from marginalised groups such as women to participate in the enforcement of rules are some of the issues that can discourage community members from engaging with each other. Integrating existing local approaches to management structures to co-management is one way to encourage interest in CMA formation, as well as ensuring that community members are aware of the mutual benefits of CMAs, using examples of success stories in similar areas.

In cases where marginalised groups such as women do not feel comfortable in playing an active role in enforcement of the rules, it would be important to look to offer training on how to participate, to engage the community broadly on the importance of women's role in marine management, to explore barriers to enthusiastic participation and/or to find other areas of decision-making that they would feel comfortable participating in, such as the process of instituting the rules and regulations. Ultimately, the community has to be interested and capable in engaging with an external entity to form a CMA, and this should be taken into consideration when identifying a community with which to work.

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3.2 Conflict resolution

In bringing together different representatives of the fish value chain, there is potential for conflicting needs and priorities related to resources, fishing rights, and other issues. Conflict management and resolution in fisheries is a vital resource dedicated to fostering harmony, cooperation, and resilience within fishing communities and co-management associations through the use of dialogue, consensus-building, and peace process strategies.

Conflicts within fishing communities can stem from a range of issues, and are likely to increase in the face of declining fish populations and the strain this puts on fishing groups. They can be both recent or deep-rooted, occuring within a broader set of social relations that may not be immediately obvious to those tasked with resolving them. They may also be between individual members of a community, or between social groups - for example migrant fishers against locals.

CMA structures empower fishers and association members, regardless of gender, to navigate and resolve conflicts effectively, thereby contributing to effective co-management and enhanced community cohesion within the fisheries sector. Drawing upon their core principles of participatory governance, CMAs must endeavour to give sufficient opportunity for all sides of a conflict to clearly, and without fear of reprisal, communicate their grievances. Similarly, CMA members must ensure that potential biases and conflicts of interest that may arise based on the parties involved are identified and mitigated.

Communities may have established protocols for addressing conflicts, which can inform CMA conflict resolution procedures. However, there are also a number of useful tools online that can guide organisations on how to manoeuvre community conflicts (particularly those around natural resources governance), including guides produced by the FAO (including the VGGT and VGSSF guidelines) and other organisations such as MRAG and Community-Led Alliance.

3.3 Corruption

Any organisation established to manage resources will encounter the risk of corruption, as competition over organisational priorities, resource ownership and governance arises. This could be CMA members conducting IUU fishing, taking bribes to hide illicit fishing, or otherwise failing to uphold the democratic and equitable principles of the CMA, may that be through actions relating to election processes, finances or other key pillars. It is vital that CMAs uphold the greatest standard of transparency. This includes multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making committees, accountability and transparency in financial reporting, as well as the documentation and reporting of stakeholders committing offences.

3.4 Durability of CMAs

There remain key challenges to the durability of CMAs, including poverty, illiteracy and a lack of continued engagement for supporting organisations. Implementing practitioners need to ensure ongoing engagement with the CMA beyond the initial formation phase. This support is essential to better understand the factors that determine uptake and ongoing implementation of relevant processes. Practitioners should also ensure follow-up action with the competent authorities, with the potential provision of incentives and other benefits to encourage community members to continue engaging with the CMA. Practitioners should also explore funding avenues for co-management activities and to cover costs associated with the running of associations.

3.5 Exclusion of marginalised groups from decision-making

Decision-making in the fisheries sector, and more broadly across society, has often failed to take into account the needs and priorities of marginalised members of society. CMAs seek to change the traditional structure and empower all participants in the fish value chain, encompassing representatives including fishers, processors and sellers and those in supporting roles such as boat builders. In order to ensure traditionally marginalised groups such as women, Indigenous groups, and ethnic minorities are included in the decisions that affect their livelihoods, both a stakeholder and network analysis should be undertaken in order to tailor the toolkit for the specific needs of the host-community. Gender inclusivity should be a major component of the awareness activities, as well as any other important marginalised groups relevant to the specific community.

CASE STUDY: Co-management of Coastal and Marine Resources in the Aquatic Larvae Conservation Area - Artisanal Fisheries Group of Ban Nam Rap, Trang Province, Thailand

Background:

Between 1996 to 2005, the four communities of Ban Nam Rap, Ban Koh Mook, Ban Kuantungkoo, and Ban Changlang, Trang Province established the "Four Village Conservation Area" (เขตทะเลสี่หมู่บ้าน) or "Le-Se-Ban Area" co-management area, aimed at restoring and preserving coastal and marine resources. Previously, with limited participation in management, these communities faced challenges due to unsustainable and destructive fishing practices resulting in a steady degradation of aquatic resources, mangrove forests, seagrass meadows and coral reefs across the area.

General scope of the project:

Upon establishment of the collaborative co-management approach, there was a noticeable improvement in the health and stability of coastal and marine resources, including a recorded increase in fish caught. Based on the success of this initial co-management mechanism, four communities alongside various governmental bodies and representatives officially signed an agreement to formalise future plans for ongoing development and resource management.

In 2011, the Libong sub-district Administrative Provision in Dugong Conservation was promulgated to provide a legal framework for conservation efforts in the area, with current ongoing development in resource management that is committed to preserving the environment and natural resources of the Le-Se-Ban area, both within the community and at the district network level. For example, the successful restoration of the entire Koh Mook Bay ecosystem highlights the effectiveness of participatory approaches in coastal resource management. By incorporating diverse opinions, affected stakeholders were able to address multiple interconnected issues, such as overfishing and habitat degradation, thus restoring ecological balance and resilience to the marine environment. This ecosystem-wide approach emphasises the importance of considering the broader ecological context and interconnectedness of marine ecosystems in collaboration co-management.

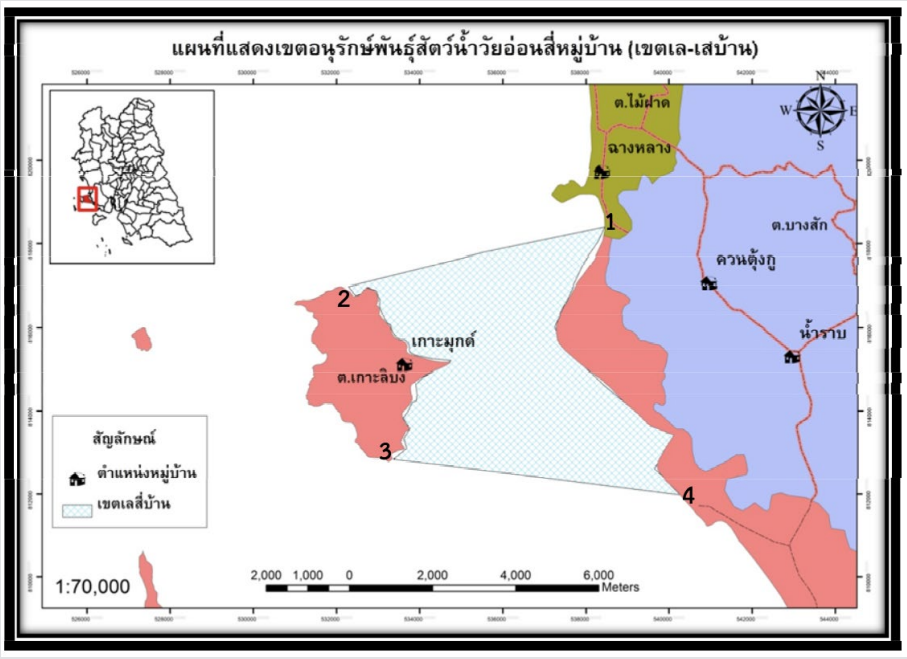

Figure 1 The Four Village Conservation Area (Wisut Thongyoi and Sakkamon Saengdara, 10 June 2016)

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Achievements:

1. **Improved fish populations especially Blue Swimming crab and biodiversity conservation.**

   Communities have established Blue Swimming crab bank stations where fishers can deposit the pregnant crabs they have found and release those crabs and juveniles once they have hatched. Research shows an increased number of Blue Swimming crabs in the area, following the initiative.

2. **Strengthened community involvement and empowerment.**

   By prohibiting the use of illegal and destructive fishing gear such as trawlers in mangrove forest areas, community forests, and canals, delicate ecosystems and the long-term viability of fish populations can be protected and secured. To ensure the compliance, communities have collaborated with the Maritime and Coastal Special Operations, conducting joint patrols as an essential monitoring mechanism to prevent illegal fishing activities.

3. **Enhanced compliance with regulations and reduced illegal fishing.**

   Coordinating with responsible government agencies to conduct arrest operations and confiscate fishing gear such as push nets, generator boats, trawlers and fish bombs has improved compliance in sustainable practices. As government authorities work with the community, regulations are more effectively enforced, and unscrupulous individuals are deterred from illegal fishing practices.

4. **Increased economic benefits for local communities.**

   The Artisanal Fisheries Group of Ban Nam Rap operates a tour business related to resource conservation, linking conservation and economic activities for the community. Maintaining a balance between economic benefits and environmental conservation, communities split their income between tourism development (30%), an environmental fund (30%) and shared income among the group and local fisher partners (40%).

5. **Improved social cohesion and conflict resolution among stakeholders.**

   At the community level, the emphasis is on implementing a management model that is driven and led by the community itself, through active participation, decision-making, and stewardship. At the network level, the approach shifts to joint management, collaborating with district-level agencies and stakeholders for broader coordination, resource mobilisation, and policy support.

Challenges:

1. **Conflicts of interest among stakeholders.**

   The use of social punishment by the Committee of the Juvenile Marine Conservation Area for offenders, such as confiscation of equipment to publicly shame the offender, has proven to be more effective than legal repercussions, such as fines or other punishments that could cause long-term conflicts and inhibit long-term committee cohesion.

2. **Depleted marine resources and fishing capacity constraints.**

   To sustainably manage marine populations, fishing in breeding grounds such as the canal is prohibited, and destructive fishing gear has been banned. The community has been made aware that this is a no-fishing zone, and the establishment of crab bank stations has boosted population numbers, facilitating sustainable management of vital food populations.

3. **External pressures such as climate change or economic factors.**

   Rising temperatures have resulted in a crisis of depleted seagrass, and this has negatively impacted vulnerable dugong populations searching for suitable habitats. Community exchanges with co-management groups resulted in the creation of boat speed boundaries, reducing the impact on migrating dugongs.

4. **Issues related to governance and institutional arrangements.**

   In 2011, the concept of ecological management was expanded in a similar way. By collaborating and ensuring community rights are upheld, coastal communities have agreed to create a cooperation plan by expanding the area at the local level in Koh Libong, Bang Sak, and Na Kluea Sub-district.

5. **Socio-cultural factors influencing cooperation and participation.**

   Social governance mechanisms have been developed to tackle the issues of socio-cultural norms that inhibit cooperation. As a result, fishermen who use destructive fishing gear are not accepted by the community, while reminders that sustainable practices bring benefits through an abundance of resources are also used to influence people to work together to protect it.

Lessons learned:

- The importance of inclusive stakeholder engagement and participation.
- The need for clear roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes.
- The value of adaptive management and learning from both successes and failures.
- The significance of building trust and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.
- The necessity of integrating traditional knowledge with scientific expertise.
- The role of supportive policies, legal frameworks and institutional support.
- The importance of long-term commitment and sustainability in fisheries management.

Next steps:

- Strengthening institutional capacity and governance structure.
- Investing in community capacity building and education.
- Enhancing monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms.
- Promoting cross-sectoral collaboration and partnership.
- Supporting research and knowledge sharing initiatives.

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4. Using CMAs as vehicles to identify and prevent industrial and artisanal IUU fishing

IUU fishing is a major threat to ocean sustainability, and disproportionately impacts small-scale fishing communities, particularly those in the Global South. While IUU fishing by the industrial sector is more harmful on account of the size, scale and capture capacity of the fleet, small-scale fishers also engage in harmful practices – sometimes as a response to declining fish populations – which must also be addressed.

Small-scale IUU fishing can take many forms, and will depend on the national fisheries context within which fishing activities are occurring. In Tanzania for example, the issue of 'blast' fishing – in which explosives are used to kill large numbers of fish – has been highlighted as a major ecological concern, causing lasting damage to coral reefs that are home to legions of fish species and serve a wide-range of ecosystem services. Other common forms of small-scale IUU fishing include the use of monofilament nets with below-regulation net sizes which can result in high-levels of bycatch, as well as fishing during closed seasons and fishing without authorisation.

CMAs are ideally placed to serve as conduits between competent fishing authorities and community members, so as to spread awareness and identify instances of IUU fishing, both by the artisanal and industrial fleets. CMA leadership should develop a comprehensive understanding of the relevant fisheries' legal and regulatory frameworks, in particular how they relate to small-scale fisheries. This can be done through consultation with other fisheries stakeholders – for example NGOs, development organisations and local/national authorities. In Ghana, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) alongside in-country partnership NGOs has worked closely with CMAs to improve collaboration on law enforcement. Regulatory and legislative frameworks can also often be found online, such as in the FAO's FAOLEX database or on the webpage of competent fishing authorities (such as a ministry for fisheries, or fisheries commission), and should be consulted if clarity is required as to whether IUU fishing has taken place.

Once equipped with a thorough understanding of IUU fishing, CMAs can be integral in the dissemination of knowledge and best practices throughout the communities they represent.This can take a range of forms, and will be dependent on the dynamics within the community, whether through (for example) a word of mouth campaign, formalised community meetings, deployment of posters or billboards, workshops, or engagement with local radio stations. It is important that fishers comprehensively understand which fishing activities are considered to be illegal, the legal and ecological ramifications of these activities, and how they can transition away from these activities.

CMAs can also be pivotal in the detection of IUU fishing within their communities, and are uniquely placed to identify its occurrence on their landing beaches - for example seeing vessels equipped with undersized fishing nets, or the landing of fish during a closed season. They can also deter IUU fishing ahead of time, as the visibility of CMA members and knowledge of increased community efforts to end harmful practices can serve to curb such practices. In Ghana, CMA members were equipped with high visibility jackets so as to make their presence better known at the sea front and amongst communities. It is important that CMA members remain conscious of their remit and do not attempt to arrest or otherwise harm those involved in suspected IUU fishing, instead engaging with the relevant authorities to bring about suitable and legal actions where necessary. Community surveillance tools such as EJF's DASE app can also be used to gather evidence, including photos, videos and coordinates that can be submitted for further analysis and action to be taken.

Through their engagement with community surveillance projects, in some fisheries (particularly those in which small-scale and industrial vessels operate in the same waters) CMAs can also train and galvanise fishers in detecting and deterring industrial IUU fishing. This can be through IUU fishing awareness raising, training fishers alongside deploying organisations in community surveillance techniques and communicating user-issues to deploying organisations and safeguarding equipment that has been given to communities for surveillance.

As voices for their communities, CMAs can also raise concerns about IUU fishing regulations that may be inappropriately impacting the livelihoods of small-scale fishers, or if community members are subject to violence by authorities under the guise of anti-IUU fishing action. Studies have suggested that small-scale fishers may be 'collateral damage' in the context of the global fight against IUU fishing, and fall victim to the relative ease of enforcement compared to that against industrial vessels. This is because industrial vessels often hold disproportionate power and can be more difficult to identify and prosecute on account of opaque corporate structures, not using the coastal state ports that they are operating in, and because their activities are often farther from shore. CMAs should be wary of such issues, and work alongside supporting partners to draw attention to instances of violent enforcement by authorities, or instances where it is perceived that anti-IUU fishing measures are threatening the food security or livelihoods of their communities.

5. Additional resources

The following section provides links to resources which can provide extra information and support to CMAs and the organisations working with them on the contents of this toolkit.

Resource	Description
United Republic of Tanzania Guidelines for establishing community based collaborative fisheries management in marine waters of Tanzania	An example set of guidelines developed by the United Republic of Tanzania alongside WWF to aid in the establishment of community based collaborative fisheries management in the country.
Blue Ventures LMMA Toolkit	This resource provides useful additional information on the establishment of locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) and the ways in which management structures, conflict resolution tools and ongoing progress monitoring can benefit co-management organisations. While the initial toolkit is targeted at managing LMMAs, these approaches can be adapted by facilitators to benefit CMAs.
FAO Guidebook for evaluating fisheries co-management effectiveness	This guidebook by the FAO offers a process and method to evaluate the performance of a fisheries co-management system and its plan, in order to enhance its effectiveness in delivering benefits and in contributing to environmental, social and economic sustainability and good governance.
Feed the Future Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity (GFRA) Eyes On The Water Progress Report	This progress report highlights how the USAID GFRA project aided the development and running of co-management groups called Landing Beach Enforcement Committees (LaBECS) in Ghana.
Constitution template	This document provides an example of a constitution document that can be used as an amendable template to be tailored by CMAs to fit the needs of their association. This constitution is specific to the Communities for Fisheries project in Liberia, however the structure and wording can be replicated easily.
WorldFish co-management guidebook	A guide developed by WorldFish to assist practitioners in understanding the latest research on how to achieve effective co-management of fisheries.

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SECTION THREE

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FISHERS ASSOCIATIONS THROUGH ADVOCACY TRAINING

1. Section overview

Section three of the toolkit provides information and resources for practitioners working alongside National Fishers Associations (NFAs) who are seeking to develop an advocacy strategy, or to engage in capacity building by training NFAs in approaches to advocacy more broadly. It can however also be informative for those working to improve the advocacy of other fishers groups, for example fisheries co-management associations (CMAs). It consists of three key components:

- An introduction to NFAs, the role they may undertake and the type of issues they can advocate on;
- An overview of the SMART advocacy framework, and how it can inform the advocacy strategies of NFAs;
- A review of potential challenges for NFAs planning an advocacy campaign.

2. Introduction to NFAs

2.1 What are NFAs?

NFAs are the groups and organisations that represent fishers (be they artisanal, semi-industrial or industrial), and others involved in the fishing industry such as fish traders and processors at a national level. The primary purpose of NFAs is to advocate for the rights of the individuals and communities they represent, and to act to promote and uphold their interests nationwide.

NFAs play a key role in supporting and protecting the rights of artisanal fishers. This gives small-scale fishers and coastal communities more of a say in how fisheries are governed at a national level, facilitating large-scale change.

2.2 What types of issues can NFAs advocate on?

Small-scale fishing communities have historically suffered from political, economic and social marginalisation, often finding themselves voiceless compared to more powerful actors. To compound this, fishing communities are facing multiple and interacting stressors that are fundamentally and sometimes irreversibly changing and degrading the environments they rely upon, including global heating, overfishing, IUU fishing and land-use change driven by tourism and power infrastructure.

NFAs can play a pivotal role in advocating for improved fisheries management, reducing IUU fishing, and sustainable coastal livelihoods, serving as a common voice that can highlight the plights of their constituents. They are well-placed to access national and international decision-makers, and can address the legal, structural and technical or equity-based issues that affect fishing communities in a country collectively, such as overcapacity in the industrial fleet, illegal fishing and/or declining fish populations. They can also address insufficient or absent fisheries laws to protect the tenure of coastal fishers, and advocate for small-scale fishers when they are experiencing limited or uneven access to the goods and services they require.

NFAs are often uniquely placed to be key actors in the fight against IUU fishing, being both well connected to communities and as such having eyes on the sea, and being large and credible enough to have a seat at the table for key discussions alongside powerful national and international actors that can shape fisheries management.

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CASE STUDY: Federation of Thai Fisherfolk Association

The decline of marine resources in Thailand has had a disproportionate impact on small-scale fishers, causing economic hardships for artisanal fishers and resulting in insufficient income. Consequently, many families have abandoned their ships, opting instead for hired labour to sustain their livelihoods. This shift has contributed to the fragmentation of communities, and the consequences of this trend are apparent in the collapse of several villages and numerous communities.

In Thailand, organising artisanal fishers involves collaborative efforts to establish collective structures and networks that enhance socio-economic wellbeing and address common challenges. In this context, artisanal fishers, who typically operate on a small scale, come together to form cooperatives, associations, or community-based organisations in several forms based on their backgrounds and agendas.

In response to the decline in marine resources, various communities in the southern part of Thailand have been actively engaged in protecting and restoring the seas from destruction. In October 1993, artisanal fisher organisations in the 13 provinces along the Southern Sea coast collectively founded the "Southern Artisanal Fishers' Association." This association was created to exchange community rights, promote conservation and restoration of marine and coastal resources, facilitate career development, enhance quality of life, and advocate for policy proposals related to local fisheries communities. These efforts have established the concept of citizen-empowered and participatory management of sea and coast resources among artisanal fishing communities.

However, despite these local initiatives, Thailand's fishing industry saw little change. Recognising the need for a more consolidated effort, the Southern Artisanal Fisher's Association took the initiative to form a national network of artisanal fishers across Thailand. In 2010, they officially established and registered as the Federation of Thai Fisherfolk Association (FTFA). The goal of this NFA was to create a representative artisanal fishers' organisation at the national level and continue their mission to address the challenges faced by artisanal fishers.

The FTFA stands out as a well-equipped NFA, particularly in terms of mobilisation skills and engagement with policymakers. This has led to numerous successful events across various levels, with a notable emphasis on national-level advocacy. This effectiveness can be summarised in three key points:

1. **Integrated Framework**: FTFA is a composite organisation resulting from the merger of 67 subsidiaries across different fishing communities. These subsidiaries, each with distinct purposes such as area-based, gear-based, or issue-specific focuses (e.g., Women's Fishermen's Association, Fish Food Processing Association, Tsunami Recovery and Development Association), collectively operate under the unified structure of FTFA.

2. **Collaborative Governance**: FTFA actively engages in a co-management setting within state mechanisms, contributing perspectives on policy and legislation related to fisheries management issues. This involvement extends to various national levels, including the National Fisheries Board, Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Fisheries Dispute Resolution, and Provincial Fisheries Committee.

3. **Policy Advocacy**: While artisanal fishing has historically been overlooked in political decision-making processes, FTFA prioritises involvement in policy design. Beyond participating in state mechanisms, FTFA invites state officials and policymakers to the association's premises, facilitating direct communication and issue recognition. Recent achievements include inviting ministers of agriculture and cooperatives to the FTFA's annual assembly, fostering a process to convey local concerns and promoting the principles of good governance.

FTFA's Advocacy Agendas

The following points detail the advocacy aims of the FTFA:

1. **Advocate for shared authority among artisanal fishers in managing local coastal marine resources.** The association aims to establish legislation for provincial or local fishing committees, ensuring the rights and participation of individuals, artisanal fishers, and local governance organisations in regulating sea use at the local level.

2. **Stop destructive practices.** Encouraging responsible fishing practices, proper gear usage, and species selection can achieve balance, justice, equity, distribution, and national food security.

3. **Regulate and curb destructive large-scale fishing.** Thailand currently lacks a defined maritime boundary for efficient management of marine fisheries resources. To promote abundance, it is imperative to prohibit the operation of large-scale and destructive fishing vessels within 5 nautical miles of the coastal area.

4. **Support community empowerment for coastal resources and habitat protection.** The association advocates for policies promoting community-led resource management and conservation.

5. **Address housing issues for small rural fishers and respect their traditional way of life.** Current laws have led to the eviction of communities, hindering the right to shelter. The association calls for revising laws to protect the housing and cultural practices of local fishers.

6. **Support the productivity of small-scale fishers for economic stability and food security.** Despite the presence of high-quality aquatic resources, depletion has resulted in scarcity and diminished prices for artisanal fishers. The association advocates for the direct purchase of seafood from these artisanal fishers to address these challenges.

FTFA's Alignment with SSF Guidelines

The FTFA bases much of their work on the SSF Guidelines, emphasising voluntary, sustainable efforts to support small-scale fishers. The focus includes fostering food stability, poverty eradication, and engaging in fishing practices that promote resource conservation. Additionally, the guidelines address the demands for artisanal fishers' rights and aim to develop the potential of local fishers across various fields. Their strategies to advocate for the rights of artisanal fishers includes:

1. **Establishing a local fishing community organisation and an association for artisanal fishers.** Collaboration among diverse artisanal fishers' organisations aims to bring about practical and political changes in fisheries management. The key shift towards sustainable fishing for the FTFA is the emergence of the "Local Community Fisher's Organisation." This entity serves as a resource conservation group, safeguarding members and managing community production processes. Additionally, it provides a platform for members to participate in policy-making at various levels. The strategic focus includes encouraging the creation of artisanal fishers' associations, nurturing leadership among artisanal fishers, and improving overall quality of life.

2. **Enhancing community engagement based on gender diversity and developing the capabilities of women in the local fishing communities.** Community-driven fisheries management involving all genders seeks to foster a sustainable and inclusive sector. Despite their potential, local women in coastal areas face limitations. The FTFA focuses on empowering women, providing them with active roles in resource conservation and environmental engagement. Key objectives include integrating women into fisheries management committees, providing them with knowledge in resource management, and fostering economic stability.

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3. **Managing production and marketing, establishing community-based aquatic product management groups, promoting sustainable local fisheries standards, and communicating with consumers.** Artisanal fishers generate low incomes due to fragmented resources and high fishing costs. To improve this, the FTFA has been addressing the pricing of fishery products, raising market prices, encouraging collaboration in managing catch yields, and linking coastal conservation directly to consumers by developing the "Blue Brand Standard." This standard assures consumers that products are sourced using sustainable, environmentally-friendly, and non-destructive fishing practices, providing fair compensation to artisanal fishers. This not only meets consumer demands for quality and safety, but also creates opportunities for local fishing communities.

4. **Implementing activities focused on the rehabilitation, conservation, and development of fisheries resources, promoting sustainable fishing practices.** The FTFA have also tackled waste management in fishing communities and on vessels through awareness and promoting actionable measures. They have advocated for renewable energy to address soaring energy costs, with a focus on promoting solar energy and bio-diesel.

5. **Promoting and developing the new generation of smart fishers through the establishment of a sustainable local fishing school.** This initiative aims to educate and train fishers on responsible fishing practices. The fishing school covers theoretical and practical aspects, including regulations on fishing tools, legal practices, and outdoor fishing techniques. Emphasis is placed on instilling a sustainable fishing consciousness.

6. **Encouraging active participation in the development of policy proposals for fisheries resource management at both provincial and national levels.** Given the dynamic nature of policies and laws affecting artisanal fishers, particularly those addressing sustainable fisheries management, there is a vital need for artisanal fishers to advocate for policy reforms. This involves formulating proposals for government consideration, aiming to amend or define policies and laws that align with the livelihood of artisanal fishers. To achieve this, FTFA community-based policy reform initiatives aim to employ educational approaches, strengthen local institutions, and expand networks at national and regional levels. Promoting artisanal fishing networks plays a key role in educating the community about pertinent policy and legal issues, facilitating impactful policy suggestions.

3. The SMART Advocacy Framework

To be effective, advocacy campaigns must be well planned and executed, ensuring that they are ambitious yet realistic, accurately reflect the shared concerns of all members of their communities, including those who may find themselves marginalised, and that they can make compelling arguments that are heard by decision-makers.

The SMART Advocacy Framework is a useful tool in the planning of advocacy goals and lays out nine broad steps grouped under three headings: Build Consensus, Focus Efforts and Achieve Change.

This approach focuses on the decision-maker – the specific person with the authority to facilitate change through requests from well-informed advocacy champions. It is a comprehensive strategy that aims to better prepare advocates in advance of any advocacy action, supporting them to leverage change. A detailed guide to the SMART Advocacy Cycle can be found here. The following section will provide an abridged version of this cycle, applying it to the context of potential issues and activities that may arise for NFAs.

4. Applying the SMART Advocacy framework to issues affecting small-scale fishing communities

Phase 1 - Build Consensus

Step 1 - Understand the landscape: ***Review both internal and external factors that may affect your success. Identify any evidence you may require to highlight the advocacy need or development, and any evidence needed to monitor success.***

At this stage, NFAs can broadly map the relevant factors and contextual environment surrounding the issue they wish to advocate for. This will involve taking stock of what they know, what they need to know, what the possible challenges they may face, who the key actors are, and so on. For example, if fishers in their community are struggling to access affordable fuel, some examples of the type of information they will need to need to ascertain is: who is responsible for setting the price of fuel, what do regulations and laws say about how and where fuel is to be distributed, who will support a change to fuel distribution and who will oppose it, who are the regional and national bodies who can make decisions on this and who else in the country or area is campaigning for more equitable fuel access. Where fishers groups lack the capacity to retrieve this information, they should consider which organisations or individuals - for example local politicians, NGOs, academic institutions - may be able to ascertain more information for them.

Fishers groups should also ensure they obtain the thoughts and experiences of a wide range of their members and the communities they represent. Drawing on the above example of a lack of access to fuel, this would involve engaging with both those who are directly impacted by a lack of access to affordable fuel (i.e. fishers) and those who may be indirectly affected (e.g. women in the community who may be relied upon for providing additional finance). Gathering testimony from affected individuals can serve as useful evidence of the impacts of changing fuel prices, however, fishers groups should also consider what other evidence they can collect to support their aims.

Step 2 - Decide who to involve: ***Make sure all relevant stakeholders with the correct expertise and experience are involved.***

Ahead of an advocacy campaign, fishers groups should consider which stakeholders may be able to assist them in creating, disseminating and supporting it. This should include a range of complementary skills and expertise. Examples of fisheries stakeholders could be: representatives of fishers, fish processors and fish traders, local or international NGOs or development organisations working on fisheries or with coastal communities in the country, academic departments who work on fisheries (many universities will have departments related to marine issues), religious or spiritual institutions, local and national politicians and government institutions, local media outlets etc.

Please see the additional resources for training on stakeholder identification and engagement.

Step 3 - Set a SMART objective: ***Determine the shared long-term advocacy goal, and set a SMART objective to attain incremental progress, or an advocacy success that contributes to achieving your goal.***

A SMART objective should be: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound. Fishers groups and their partners must consider what they can realistically achieve, what they will consider 'success' to look like, and within what time period they would like this to be achieved. For example, a coastal community which is faced with rising sea levels may advocate for government support to adapt to this issue. It is likely too ambitious for a campaign to have an entire community relocated within 6 months, however, advocating for some form of sea defence to be put in place within 18 months may be more achievable. Fishers groups may also wish to consider indicators of progress to help evaluate their advocacy progress along the way.

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Phase 2 - Focus Efforts

Step 4 - Know the decision-maker: ***Identify the specific decision-maker(s) with the authority or power to achieve your objective. Build your strategy on acquired knowledge of the decision-maker.***

In this step, fishers groups need to identify which decision-makers can ultimately make the changes that they are advocating for, and whether it is realistic that they can have a direct audience with them, or whether they should engage with members of the decision-makers team. It is worth exploring the networks of both the fishers groups and any partners identified through Step 2 for potential contacts of interest. Again, it is important that realistic targets are identified; attempting to engage a national minister of fisheries may not be worthwhile for a specific community level grievance, but a regional representative from an outpost of the ministry could be an ideal target for advocacy.

Once a decision-maker has been identified, fishers groups and their partners should develop an understanding of their target - are they experts in the subject matter? Have they historically engaged on the subject matter and if so, how did they act? What are their agendas or job roles and how can you frame your issue to align with them?

Step 5 - Determine the ask: ***Collate ethical, emotional and evidence-based arguments to support your advocacy ask, aligning it with the decision-maker's priorities and interests. Develop a narrowed-scope message and determine the right messenger.***

At this stage, fishers groups should consider refining their advocacy to better reflect their targeted decision-makers and the information obtained through previous steps - drawing on the 'three e's' - ethical, emotional and evidence-based arguments. An example of this may be refining a broader advocacy campaign to stop community-level IUU fishing, to asking a subset of fishers to stop the practice of fishing using explosives. Fishers groups must consider whether ethical arguments 'this practice is unjust because', emotional arguments 'this community is suffering because', or evidence-based arguments 'data suggests that this practice is harmful because', or some combination of the three, are best suited to accomplish their aims. When deciding on who should be the 'messenger', again consider your audience and who they may respond best to - fishers within a community might be more likely to listen to community elders as opposed to academics or NGO workers, whereas local officials may be more likely to engage with NGOs than community members.

Step 6 - Create a work plan: ***Select specific advocacy actions to advance toward your SMART objective. Create a detailed plan with a timeline of assignments and necessary financial resources.***

The first stage involves mapping the available resources that a fishers group and partners on an advocacy campaign have available to them. Resources in this instance refers to not just financial resources but also time, influence, platforms, access, data, and human resources. For example, a group may hold in-depth knowledge of an issue affecting their community, and be able to facilitate access, but lack the financial resources required to sufficiently address it or raise awareness. This deficit of financial resources might be able to be filled by NGOs, or other stakeholder groups.

Once this has been done, CMAs and their partners can create a detailed work plan - identifying who will undertake what role, with estimated costs and a timeline. The work plan should be distributed to all members of the group, with individual(s) selected to ensure that the plan is adhered to, and monitoring its progress.

Phase 3 - Achieve Change

Step 7 - Present the case: ***Prepare for a meeting with the decision-maker, with supporting communication products. Execute the work plan.***

Fishers groups should consider which communication products will best support their advocacy campaign. When trying to influence a larger group of people, high-visibility approaches may be better suited such as billboards, radio shows or posters. For example, during EJF's work to end the harmful illegal 'saiko' trade in Ghana, EJF and partners displayed billboards on prominent main roads near the hub of the trade in Ghana's Central Region so as to raise awareness.

Effective communication is indispensable for groups to effectively advocate for their interests, raise awareness about pressing issues, and mobilise support for their cause. A vast array of platforms and opportunities are available to promote a message, with organisations using a range of conventional and modern methods (including various social media outlets) to access their targets. Fishers groups should develop and implement effective communication strategies to achieve their objectives, influence policy decisions, and mobilise support for sustainable fishing practices. By defining clear objectives, identifying key audiences, crafting compelling messages, selecting appropriate channels, and evaluating outcomes, associations can strengthen their communication efforts and maximise their impact.

By prioritising effective communication management strategies, fishers groups are better able to advocate for the organisation's interests and foster sustainable change for fishery management at a national or even international level. Please see the additional resources for training on communication management and advocacy strategies.

Alternatively, if the decision-maker is an individual, or a small number of individuals, fishers groups and their partners may want to prepare more detailed and tailored communications materials such as powerpoint presentations, or other materials. In Thailand, as part of EJF's campaign to tackle the issue of 'ghost nets' (i.e. discarded nets that continue to ensnare marine life), EJF advocated in local schools to raise awareness of the issue amongst younger generations - bringing with them both examples of harmful nets, and the materials that EJF have recycled them into through the 'Net Free Seas' campaign. In November 2022, EJF brought together 80 students and professors, as well as several relevant Senegalese stakeholders, including small-scale fishers and local authorities, at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar to discuss community surveillance. The event aimed to raise awareness on innovative and inclusive solutions to fight against IUU fishing amongst future leaders and fisheries managers.

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Step 8 - Monitor the plan:

Create a framework to monitor progress, identifying benchmarks and criteria to assess success and ensure the plan progresses. Ensure your plan is adaptable and flexible to new strategies when circumstances change.

The SMART Advocacy Framework acknowledges that advocacy campaigns can be complex, and successes may be incremental. To gauge progress, fishers groups should develop a set of indicators that would, for them, mark success. For example, in a community-level advocacy campaign to end blast fishing, metrics may be: reduced instances of blast fishing, an improved understanding of the harms of blast fishing reported amongst fishers, pledges received from blast fishers that they will stop the practice, a change in national policies on blast fishing, increased presence of authorities in the community following the advocacy campaign, or similar. Where possible, fishers groups should try and assign specific metrics to these, so as to better measure success - e.g. agreeing that 5 reports of blast fishing a month, from a baseline of 50 per month, would be considered a success.

Step 9 - Capture results:

When you achieve an advocacy goal, celebrate and thank your decision-maker, document the successful process and evaluate your strategy in terms of what worked and what could have been better. Decide the next steps to restart the advocacy cycle.

On accomplishing some or all of their advocacy goals, fishers groups are encouraged to publicise their successes, which can build their legitimacy as an organisation, inspire other groups or community groups to organise and advocate and potentially appeal to organisations or institutions looking to fund grassroots or national-level campaigns. This can then enable groups to broaden their future advocacy efforts.

Simultaneously, fishers groups and their advocacy partners should reflect on the successes, failures and challenges faced during their campaign, and ensure that learning is entrenched and shared. This will enable a higher chance of future advocacy efforts achieving the desired outcomes.

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5. Potential challenges for NFAs planning an advocacy campaign

5.1 Lack of financial resources

Many NFAs struggle to generate funding to help support their advocacy efforts. As they represent individuals and communities that lack resources themselves, finding enough money to cover salaries, campaigns, meetings and running costs can be a significant impediment.

One strategy that can be implemented by NFAs is through the collection of dues from their members as a means of generating a steady income. Huge numbers of fishers can be represented by such organisations - for example the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) is thought to have a membership of 100,000 fishers - and as such even a relatively small monthly or annual contribution by their constituents could raise significant amounts of funding. However this approach would require relatively sophisticated bookkeeping and administrative processes, and may alienate fishers who are unwilling or unable to financially contribute to NFAs.

Another potential avenue for funding opportunities is through partnership with, or sub-grants from NGOs and/or international development agencies such as the European Union (EU), US Agency for International Development (USAID), Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), all of whom have invested extensively in fisheries improvement projects globally. NFAs are host to a depth and breadth of information and knowledge of fisheries, fishing practices and other institutions, as well as having unparalleled access to fishing communities, making them a valuable asset - particularly to organisations or institutions not familiar with the national context.

5.2 Lack of formalised processes and structures

One common hurdle for NFAs is a lack of clearly defined and well-executed processes and structures, which in turn results in minimised impact. Effective strategic planning leads to improved resource allocation, better decision-making, and adaptability to changes in the fishing industry. Strategic planning is a structured process that plays a crucial role in helping national fishing groups define their direction and achieve their goals related to sustainable fisheries management, economic growth, and community well-being.

Effective strategic planning is fundamental to the success of NFAs. It is therefore important that NFAs are equipped with the skills to design and implement a strategic plan in alignment with their goals and to maximise their efforts toward sustainable fisheries management and community well-being. NFAs can implement strategic planning through:

- Evaluating the organisation's current state, including financial analysis, conducting a community needs assessment, and project review.
- Conducting a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), which helps identify internal strengths and weaknesses, along with external opportunities and threats.
- Defining Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals.
- Including a diverse range of stakeholders in the planning process, including fishers, local communities, government agencies, and conservation organisations.
- Defining a clear vision and mission statement to guide planning and ensure activities are in line with the NFAs overarching goals.
- Implementing regular evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan.

These defined actions help NFAs clarify the organisation's direction and future goals, as well as its core purpose and values. See the additional resource section for training material on strategic planning.

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CASE STUDY: The Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC)

The Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) is a NFA which was established in 1982. It plays a crucial role in Ghana's fishing industry by providing a unified voice for small-scale fishermen across the country. According to its draft constitution, it concerns itself with matters affecting canoe fishers in Ghana and takes actions considered expedient to promote:

- The socio-economic interests of canoe fishers;
- High standards of professionalism and etiquette among canoe fishers;
- Opportunities for the acquisition and dissemination of useful information among canoe fishers;
- Taking of gifts, borrowing or raising money and subscribing to local or international grants for charitable purposes within the fisheries sector.

Over the years, the GNCFC has consistently represented the interests of artisanal fishers in Ghana, and currently has branches across the four coastal regions of the country. Chief fishermen serve as the leadership, and are the first point of call in the resolution of fisheries conflicts within fishing communities along the coast of Ghana. The GNCFC is increasingly leading initiatives that provide avenues for canoe fishers at the landing beaches to liaise with the government in the formulation and implementation of fisheries policies as well as advocate for reforms in the fisheries sector.

Significant actions led by the GNCFC under the Far Dwuma Nkodo Project in Ghana

Between 2017 and 2021, EJF worked in partnership with the Ghanaian NGO, Hen Mpoano, to implement the Far Dwuma Nkodo (FDN) project. Among the key objectives of the project was the establishment and strengthening of fisheries co-management structures and the enhancement of community participation in monitoring, control, surveillance (MCS) and enforcement. The project also included collaboration with the GNCFC to secure greater environmental sustainability and social equity in Ghana's fisheries sector, by supporting efforts to reduce illegal fishing and building the capacity of fishing communities in the sustainable management of their resources.

Advocacy to end 'saiko'

One of the most significant and successful actions of a national association under the FDN project in Ghana was the call by the GNCFC to an end of 'saiko' – illegal trans-shipment of fish at sea. Saiko is the local name for a particularly destructive form of illegal fishing, where foreign trawlers target the staple catch of Ghanaian canoe fishers which, once caught by the trawlers, is then transferred to specially adapted canoes out at sea and sold to the fishing communities. This was previously a practice whereby canoes would buy the unwanted by-catch of industrial vessels. However, it developed into a lucrative organised crime, where trawlers illegally targeted species which they are not licensed to fish for to sell to the local people. They were forced to buy it because, as a direct result of saiko, they were struggling to catch enough fish to sustain their livelihoods. These catches often contained juvenile fish, and had severe implications for Ghana's small-scale fishing industry, which is critical to food security.

In 2020, the GNCFC led a joint strategy to end saiko, which included leading engagements with nine communities, and three regional dialogues which directly reached over 1300 stakeholders. Activities also included beach level protests, press engagements, a joint open letter to the President to end saiko, joint communication materials disseminated in national newspapers, and several formal and informal engagements with senior government officials.

In June 2020, the GNCFC, together with eight civil society organisations in the fisheries sector, called on the President of Ghana in an open letter to issue an urgent directive to end illegal saiko fishing. The letter emphasised that if the saiko menace was not urgently addressed and measures instituted to permanently eradicate it, the source of income for over 2.7 million Ghanaians that depend on the fisheries sector for their livelihoods would be lost.

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This would have large-scale, widespread negative impacts on food security, nutrition, incomes, and livelihoods, while presenting a threat to national security.

Additionally, in an effort led by the GNCFC, over 600 artisanal fishers (including women processors and traders) actively participated in a week-long silent protest against saiko at various landing beaches across the four coastal regions. These actions cumulatively resulted in a pledge of support for the campaign from the Select Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs, a comment to end saiko in the 2020 budget statements, clarification from the sector Minister of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on the illegality of saiko, and a statement by the President of Ghana to end saiko during a radio interview.

5.3 Insufficient participation of marginalised groups

Although there has been significantly more attention to the concept of participatory governance of natural resources, marginalised groups can still find themselves excluded entirely from decision-making structures. NFAs should ensure that their advocacy work takes into consideration the diversity of viewpoints and needs that may exist within their constituencies, taking action to create truly participatory spaces in order to facilitate this. While some NFAs will be made up of almost exclusive male or female members - reflecting the gendered nature of small-scale fisheries in some countries in which fishers are predominantly or exclusively male, and fisher processors female - it is important that advocacy campaigns consider the potential benefits or burdens that may arise for all members of the communities they represent.

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To counter this, NFAs should work to actively engage and include marginalised groups. This can be achieved by:

- Recognising the gender disparities in workload distribution and compensation, as well as enduring attitudes towards gender stereotyping within the fisheries sector.
- Advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment in fisheries governance, thereby promoting more equitable and sustainable fishing practices within the NFA.
- Conducting in-depth stakeholder analyses to identify all parties involved in the fisheries value chain, before working to actively engage these stakeholders. This process should include considering the needs, challenges and opportunities for each group of stakeholders and working respectfully to encourage their active participation in NFAs activities.
- Enhance engagement with literature and stakeholders who can advise on best-practices with regards to effective participatory governance of natural resources - for example the IUCN's work on Gender and Natural Resource Governance or training materials prepared by WorldFish and partners on 'Assessing inclusion in community-based natural resource management'.
- Recognising where migrant fishers make up a significant stakeholder group, and encouraging them to actively participate in NFA activities. In some cases, migrant fishers only work seasonally and hence they may be excluded from discussions or decisions that will impact their livelihoods if they are not always present. Migrant fishers may be marginalised, and risk some of their rights not being upheld and as such NFAs should seek to include this group in their activities.

By prioritising diverse stakeholder engagement, NFAs are better able to represent the varied groups that have an interest in sustainable fisheries management.

6. Additional resources

The following section provides links to resources which can provide extra information and support to fisher groups and the organisations working with them on the contents of this toolkit.

Resource	Description
Smart Advocacy Users Guide	This booklet is a comprehensive guide into how best to achieve a near-term "advocacy win." It provides a step-by-step process that demonstrates the importance of an evidence-driven strategy and a SMART objective that NFAs can use to drive forward their advocacy goals.
Governance document templates (Liberia)	This document provides an example of a constitution document that can be used as an amendable template to be tailored by NFAs to fit the needs of their association. This constitution is specific to the Liberia Artisanal Fishers' Association, however the structure and wording can be easily adapted and utilised.
EJF guide to the international legal framework for fisheries management and the fight against IUU fishing	This guide is designed to provide NFAs with an understanding of the key elements of the international legal and governance framework of fisheries management, with a view to strengthening their capacity to conduct advocacy at the national level and ensure compliance with international standards.

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