



Economic Inclusion and social protection to reduce poverty Fisheries and aquaculture

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The issue

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the fisheries and aquaculture sector directly, by impacting the health of fishers and fish-workers, and indirectly by hindering their socioeconomic development, with different implications for the livelihoods of men and women, boys and girls.

The prevent and control measures including movement restriction and lockdowns have affected fish trade, created changes in consumer demand, generated logistical problems around distribution channels and fishers' access to markets, and have limited the availability of migrant workers, all factors on which the sector depends on to operate and thrive. These disruptions in the value-chain decrease the income of fishers and fish-workers and all those in fisheries' dependent communities, and can instigate negative coping strategies including reducing the budget allocated for food, resulting in food insecurity and malnutrition; withdrawing children from school and increasing child labour; violating other core labour standards and breaching standards under the ILO's 188 Work in Fishing Convention (C188), disempowering women as their income in post-harvest activities is also lost, and increasing the risks of gender-based violence. In many fishing communities, women traditionally face more problems than men, due to their poor access to technologies, finance for enterprise expansion, markets and transport, and their plight is worsened under the COVID-19.

The negative impacts of the pandemic are coupled with climate change that the sector has already experienced, which have reduced the available stock of fish and in turn affects their income. In parallel, being located at the water front, fishing-dependent communities are exposed to constant climate change impacts, such as flooding and hurricanes. Fishers' general poverty situation hinders their capacity to adapt to these impacts, and therefore increases their vulnerability. Overall, the compounded disaster impacts of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic difficult the accomplishment of the 2030 agenda and increased the risk of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Responding to the pandemic provides an opportunity to build back better, and help achieve better decent employment conditions and overall the 2030 Agenda within the sector, mainly SDG 1 (no poverty), 2 (no hunger) and 3 (gender equality). In particular, social protection systems and inclusive and gender-responsive policies and programs can help achieve socioeconomic development and empowerment of most vulnerable, by integrating fishers and fish-workers (both men and women), who are often invisible and excluded from decision-making, due to the informal and land-absent nature of their work.

Budget

USD 20 million

Time frame

2020–2023

SDGs



Related FAO policy notes on COVID-19

- ▶ [How is COVID-19 affecting the fisheries and aquaculture food systems](#)
- ▶ [The effects of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture in Asia](#)
- ▶ [Best practices for developing surveys and questionnaires on the impacts of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture](#)
- ▶ [Policy Brief: Legal Considerations in Responses to COVID-19 to Mitigate the Risk of Disruption to Fisheries and Aquaculture Food Systems](#)
- ▶ [Summary of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fisheries and aquaculture sector: Addendum to the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020](#)
- ▶ [The impact of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture – A global assessment from the perspective of regional fishery bodies](#)
- ▶ [The role of finance in mitigating COVID-19 impacts in fisheries](#)



The action

This programme will have the threefold goal of mitigating the immediate socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 on the fisheries and aquaculture sector, building towards a long-term and equitable reconstruction process of double inclusion (social and economic) and adapting to climate change impacts. This will involve the following interconnected actions (a proposed organization of the workplan can be found in annex 1):

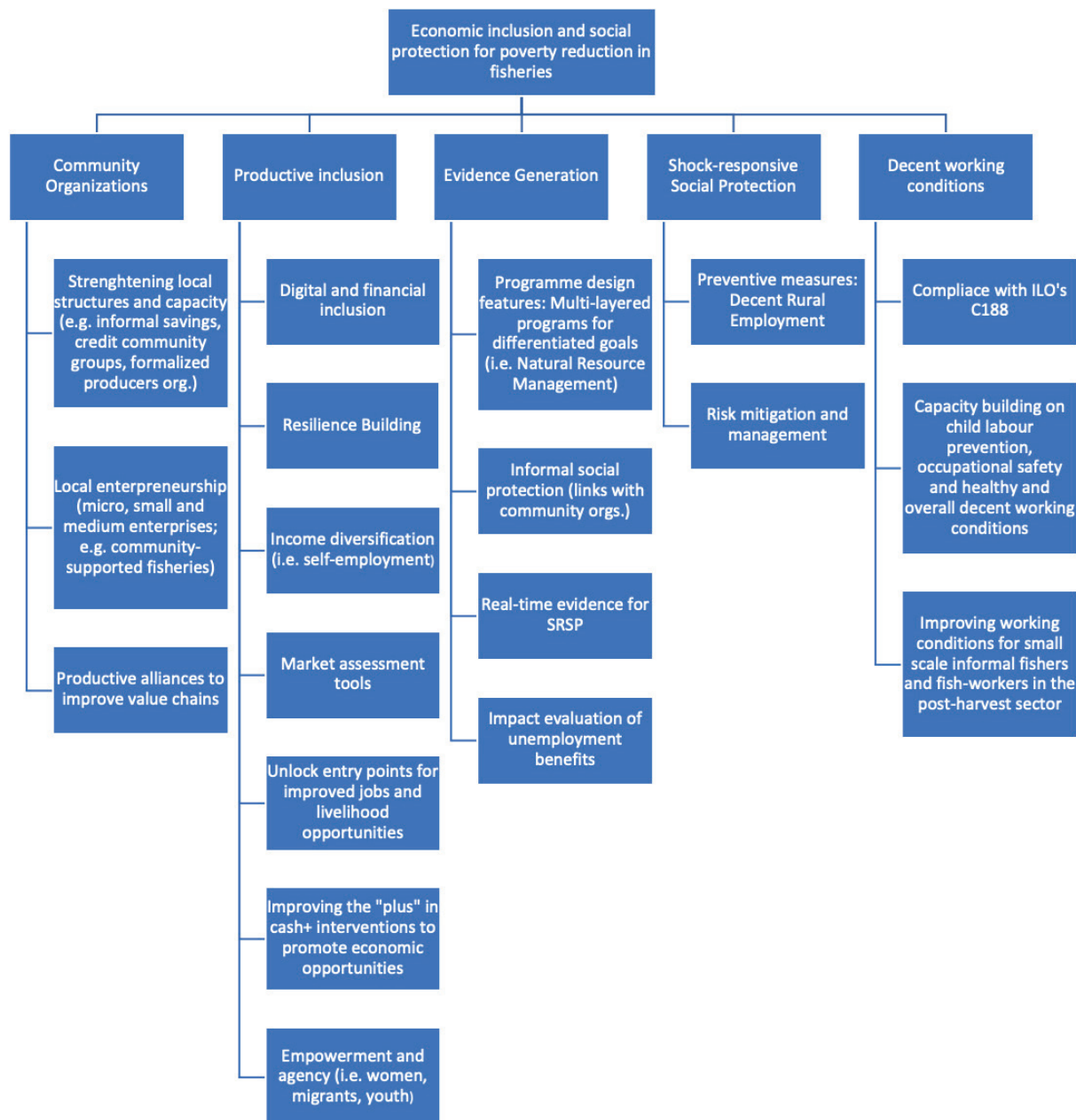
- 1 Support the design and implementation of social protection programmes to ensure they are extended to and directly targeting the fisheries and aquaculture sector. In particular, ensuring that the programmes include those in the informal sector, women in aquaculture, the post-harvesting sector (processing and marketing) migrant fishers; households at risk of using child labour.
- 2 Support the design of inclusive and equitable policies and programmes to comply with the C188 and to enforce decent working conditions off-vessel for fishers, fish-workers and those in the post-harvest sector to tackle the worst forms of labour exploitation, including for children.
- 3 Support evidence collection and knowledge generation on on- and off-board working conditions in the sector, including sex- and age-disaggregated data, options to reduce the worst occupational safety and health hazards to enhance fishers' livelihoods and social and economic inclusion and mitigate negative coping strategies such as the use of child labour.
- 4 Advocate for and support the development of integrated targeting mechanisms and social registries of workers in fish-value chains.
- 5 Support evidence-based advocacy, through a mapping and analysis of policy responses to COVID-19 in place and how they affect fishers and fish-workers (both men and women), and they create synergies with other areas such as natural resource management and climate change adaptation.
- 6 Support a research agenda to generate evidence on the short and-medium term impact of social protection and economic inclusion programmes in the sector.
- 7 Develop guidelines on the inclusion and protection of fishers to recover from the shocks of COVID-19 and to build the resilience to further shocks including climate change.
- 8 Work with rural institutions to improve logistics and access to services and markets, promoting the engagement and development of producers' and women organizations, and micro-small and medium

sized enterprises as agents of change, including through online and off-line trainings on marketing, business development, resilience building and innovation and digital distribution, among others.

- 9 Develop evidence-based guidelines on how to achieve digital transformation and inclusion in the sector as a response to logistical difficulties in the distribution channels due to COVID-19 and climate change impacts.

Expected results

- 1 Enhanced access of fishers to rural social protection programmes, that integrate risk-informed and shock-responsive components with linkages to natural resource management and climate change adaptation measures.
- 2 Evidence will be generated and disseminated on the need for an impacts of social protection policies and programmes on fisheries and aquaculture, assessing gender impacts, particularly with linkages with natural resource management and climate change adaptation.
- 3 Strengthened or developed integrated national fisheries registries that include women and migrant fishers.
- 4 Improved decent working conditions for fishers on and off board vessels, and consequently, enhanced livelihoods and most serious forms of labour violations prevented.
- 5 Increased synergies with economic inclusion and gender-responsive processes, including productive interventions (extension and market services), productive infrastructure (e.g. post harvest facilities, cold storage, etc.), natural resource management, climate-smart and labour-saving technologies, financial inclusion and digital inclusion.
- 6 Enhanced livelihood security by supporting fishers' organizations (including women's and youth associations) and increasing their access to finance, knowledge, markets and social protection programmes as well as their capacity to act as service providers.
- 7 Adoption of programmatic and policy-oriented measures to include fishers and fish-workers into social protection schemes and innovative new market channels such as e-commerce and public procurement processes, and to support women's involvement throughout fisheries value chains.
- 8 Knowledge and capacity will be increased through South-South and Triangular cooperation to share lessons learned on double inclusion of fishers.



Programme links

The programme will build synergies with FAO's Hand-in-Hand initiative, other FAO COVID-19 response programmes and gender projects. It will tie in with FAO's rural poverty reduction programme, FAO's Rural Social Protection programme, and other COVID-19 response programmes. Similarly, this programme will build on the platform for the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and contribute to the achievement of FAO's Policy on Gender Equality.

Partnerships

The International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, the World Food Programme, governments, producer organizations, informal groups such as the Dimitra Clubs, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, researchers and funding partners.

Country focus

Brazil, Barbados, Colombia, Dominica, Fiji, Grenada, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Tunisia, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago

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