

Timber remains the most common material for the construction of boats under 15 metres in length. There has been a change towards fibre-reinforced plastic in most developed countries and some developing countries but, in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, probably more than 90 percent of small fishing vessels are built of wood. The cost advantage of timber versus other materials is still sufficient to ensure that it will remain the dominant boatbuilding material for a long time to come in developing countries. However, unrestricted or illicit access to forest resources and the introduction of rational forestry management policies have caused and will continue to cause a scarcity of the sections of timbers traditionally favoured by boatbuilders.

The resultant scarcity and high cost of good quality timber have not meant that less wooden boats are being built, but rather that vessel quality has deteriorated through the use of inferior timber and inadequate design strength.

This updated and completely revised publication supersedes Revision 1 of FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 134 published in 1997. It follows an exhaustive study on structural timber design applied to wooden boat construction. The publication includes the designs of four small fishing vessels (from 5.2 to 8.5 metres), with comprehensive material specifications and lists, and provides detailed instructions for their construction, both planked and of plywood. The designs are appropriate for inshore and coastal fisheries and emphasis has been placed on relative ease of construction and minimum wastage of timber.

