

1st Meeting of the FAO-COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management
(15-18 January 2024)

EU intervention

Item II: [Current fisheries management practices with special considerations for small-scale fisheries](#)

1. Effective small-scale fisheries management is key to achieve sustainable fisheries, because small-scale fisheries is a source of livelihood, food security and nutrition for many. It also accounts, in some places, for a substantial share of the catches and is sometimes less controlled than larger industrial fisheries.
2. Management measures must be adapted to the local socio-economic and cultural contexts. Many challenges relate to weak human, financial and technical capacities, but also to the small-scale fisheries vulnerability facing other competitors for the coastal space and access to waters, particularly in least developed countries. All these issues require attention, capacity development and technical support by FAO and its donor members through participatory approaches.
3. In its introduction, the sessional paper seems to suggest that the objectives of maximising catches and maintaining ecosystem function and structure are sometimes pursued at the expense of the social, economic, nutritional or gender dimensions of fisheries. This should not be the case.
4. For the EU, effective fisheries management should reconcile those aspects in a balanced way for the benefit of the ecosystems, marine resources and of the people who live on them. The EU is committed to managing fisheries through a comprehensive approach, contributing to long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability objectives.
5. Within the EU, small-scale coastal fisheries play an important socio-economic role. They represent most of the fishing vessels registered and a significant share of the employment in the fishing sector.
6. We concur that knowledge of the economic, and especially the social sustainability status of small-scale fisheries is incomplete. We have committed to reinforcing the collection of social data, through the further development of social indicators and other methods, that will help to provide a better understanding of the social impact on dependent communities.
7. We will work on the improved understanding and transparency of national fisheries managements systems, through the development of a vademecum on the allocation of fishing opportunities in the EU as well as the preparation of national fisheries profiles detailing national management systems and socio-economic contexts for each EU Member State.
8. The reform of the EU fisheries control regulation that just entered into force on 9 January will require mandatory electronic reporting of catches for small-scale fisheries and tracking systems as from 2028. This will provide an opportunity for small-scale fishers to become fully involved in the long-term management of fish stocks. It will bring more transparency in the supply chain, more added value to fishery products supplied by small-scale fisheries, and will improve the scientific assessment of stocks and associated fisheries management decisions.

9. The specific situation of small-scale fisheries in export trade is taken into account in the catch certification scheme: the EU certification requirements have been adapted to facilitate the request for validation which will be done by the exporter following certain criteria based upon this specific situation.
10. These approaches could serve as inspiration for other FAO members, and for FAO to initiate discussions and devise a plan for ensuring cost-effective solutions for sustainable smallscale fisheries management, including in developing countries.
11. From a governance point of view, small-scale coastal fishers should participate in all decision-making processes that may affect their lives and livelihoods; their voice should be heard, starting with this sub-committee.
12. At international, regional and bilateral levels, the EU is and will continue to be a strong supporter of the measures giving fishers a voice in the decisions that affect their livelihoods, safeguard environmentally sustainable fishing practices, promote scientific cooperation, and provide economic, social and employment benefits.