

Global employment in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture - Metadata

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01) Title

Global employment in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture - Metadata

02) Data source information

Compiling Organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Data source

[Global employment in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture](#)

03) Contact

Contact organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Contact organization unit

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04) Update date

Metadata last posted

31/08/2026

Metadata last update

31/08/2026

05) Statistical presentation

Data description

This dataset covers annual series of the total number of people employed in the primary sector of fishing and aquaculture, by country, by occupational category, by sex and working time status.

Coverage

The dataset provides comprehensive coverage of employment in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture, including 223 countries or territories.

Sector coverage

Capture fisheries and aquaculture

Statistical concepts and definitions

Statistical concepts and standards related to fisheries and aquaculture statistics are available in the [Handbook of Fishery Statistics of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics \(CWP\)](#) .

Reference area

The list of countries and the geographical classification are primarily based on the UN “[Standard country or area codes for statistical use](#)”. Additional country classifications available in the released workspace of this dataset available in FishStatJ or online query panel are based on a variety of sources. Here below the main ones:

- [Least Developed Countries \(LDC\) \(version 2024\)](#)
- [Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries \(LIFDCs\) \(2026 revision\)](#)
- [Landlocked Developing Countries \(LLDCs\)](#)
- [Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\)](#)
- [Net Food-Importing Developing Countries \(NFIDC\) \(2024 revision\)](#)
- [The classification of the World Bank by income \(2026 revision\)](#)

The term “country” or “country or area” as used in the dataset also covers territories, cities and land areas, as well as provinces, districts, enclaves and other parts of territories or combinations of countries or areas such as economic or customs unions. Country or area names and designations are subject to nationally announced changes. Name changes announced recently may not have been incorporated in this dataset release but will be reflected in future ones. The designations employed and the presentation of material in this dataset do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Specific notes on geographical coverage:

- 1) Information provided by Ukraine excludes statistical data concerning the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. The information is presented without prejudice to relevant UN General Assembly and UN Security Council resolutions, which reaffirm the territorial integrity of Ukraine.
- 2) Information provided by the Russian Federation includes statistical data for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation.
- 3) Data for countries that belonged to the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (former USSR) are available as a single aggregate until 1991.
- 4) For statistical purposes, the data for China do not include China, Hong Kong SAR, China, Macao SAR and Taiwan Province of China, which are presented separately. Therefore, “China” refers to China’s mainland only.
- 5) Detailed country or area notes are available inside the global fisheries and aquaculture production workspace in FishStatJ.

Time coverage

From 1995 to 2024

Base period

Not applicable

06) Unit of measure

Number of people

07) Reference period

The annual period used is the calendar year (1 January-31 December).

08) Institutional mandate**Legal acts and other agreements**

[Article I of the FAO Constitution](#) requires the Organization to collect, analyze, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture (FAO, 1945).

Data acquisition and data transmission

These statistics are drawn primarily from official data from countries and territories, who have primary responsibility for data collection. FAO collects data from countries annually through questionnaires specific to each dataset and each country. For 53 countries, data is collected jointly with the OECD.

Data are complemented or replaced, when necessary, by data from other sources (e.g. fishery censuses, ministry reports, nationally representative survey data etc.) in accordance with the standards of the CWP.

09) Confidentiality**Confidentiality - policy**

FAO data and statistics are produced in accordance with FAO Policy on Data Protection and the implementation modalities of FAO SDQAF Principle 4 on Data protection and Statistical Confidentiality.

Confidentiality - data treatment

If any, confidential data are not disseminated by FAO as such. Suppressed confidential data are marked in the database with SDMX flag “Q - Missing value; suppressed”.

Privacy

Not applicable

10) Release policy**Release calendar**

FAO FishStat data releases follow a release calendar available publicly at the main FAO FishStat page at [\[https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/fishstat\]](https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/fishstat).

Release calendar access

[Release calendar](#)

User access

This data domain is disseminated according to FAO's Open Data Licensing for Statistical Databases Policy, under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license \(CC-BY 4.0\)](#) and are subject to [FAO Statistical Database Terms of Use](#).

Open data license

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11) Frequency of dissemination

Yearly

12) Accessibility and clarity

News release

Not applicable

Publications

[FAO Fishery and Aquaculture Statistical Yearbook](#)

[The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture](#)

Online database

[Global employment in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture](#)

Micro-data access

Not applicable

Other formats

This dataset can be consulted through different [tools and formats](#)

Documentation on methodology

Information on the methodology followed is available in the Annex 2 “Methodological notes and glossary” of the [FAO Yearbook Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics](#).

13) Relevance

User needs

The expected main users are FAO analysts, other international organizations, ministries and government agencies, agro-industry, trade and professional associations, research institutes and universities, journalists and the general public. Since the data is disseminated for the first time in 2026, no information is available yet on the composition of users. Users are encouraged to contact the dataset owner to resolve more specific queries that are not addressed elsewhere in these metadata.

User satisfaction

This dataset is disseminated for the first time in 2026, feedback has to be yet collected.

Completeness

The availability of official data reported by countries varies widely. Whenever national offices failed to report their annual fishery and aquaculture statistics in time for the dissemination of the dataset, FAO estimated the quantities on the basis of other available information using approved methodologies in order to create a comprehensive global dataset. These estimates enable meaningful aggregates at the global, regional and national levels.

For all dimensions (occupational category, working time status and sex) there is the “unspecified” option that needs to be considered when aggregating the data. There are 16 countries (including 9 percent of all workers) where at least part of the data cannot be disaggregated by working domain. Furthermore, 38 and 41 percent of data disaggregated by working time status and sex is reported as “unspecified”, respectively.

14) Accuracy and reliability

Overall accuracy

The share of imputed data (“I”) is about 30 percent of the total. Quality of the data varies according to the country, in particular in reference to the level of disaggregation.

Model assumption error

Not applicable

Imputation indicators

Imputation rate (number of people): 50 percent in 2024 (32 percent if not including India).

Data revision - policy

Prefilled questionnaires are sent out with reported data from 1995, which countries are asked to revise when they report data for the employment figures of the year.

Data revision - practice

Countries regularly revise their official statistics for past periods as well as for the latest reporting year. Estimates/imputations done by FAO might be also revised on the basis of more accurate information. When previously published data are revised, they are disseminated concurrently with the new data release. Therefore, users are advised to refrain from comparing data published in previous releases with the latest one.

15) Timeliness and punctuality

Timeliness

The deadline for submitting fishery and aquaculture data to FAO is usually between 8 to 9 months after the end of the reference year. Data are then normally processed and disseminated within 6 months.

Punctuality

The release is according to the schedule of the calendar.

16) Coherence and comparability

Comparability - geographical

Data are mostly comparable between geographical areas, countries or regions. However, it should be taken into account that the degree of comparability might be affected by the differences in methods and coverage of data collections between countries, except for regions where countries are bound by regulations mandating harmonized methods, such as European Union countries.

Comparability - over time

For shorter time periods, reasonably good comparability over time can be expected. However, when looking at longer periods, comparability may be limited due to changes in data collection methods and statistical concepts. Detailed information on data variations and methodological changes is provided in the country notes, available in FishStatJ “Number of fishers and fish farmers” workspace, employment dataset.

Coherence

FAO jointly collects data with the OECD for 53 countries. These data are therefore also available via the [OECD Data Explorer • Employment in fisheries, aquaculture and processing](#) dataset and are fully in line with the data presented by FAO. As coverage for Subsistence workers and Fish processors is limited at the global level, FAO does not publish employment in these domains to avoid users calculating incomplete aggregates. The use of internationally recognised code lists such as the “ISCO – 08” and the FAO major fishing areas, help to ensure cross-domain coherence.

Classification system

- [ISCO – 08](#)
- Working time status defined by [CWP](#)
- [UN “STANDARD COUNTRY OR AREA CODES FOR STATISTICAL USE”](#)

17) Statistical process

Source data

The main data source is official statistics from FAO member countries. The national data can originate from surveys, administrative databases and estimates based on expert observations. The type of source used by countries can significantly affect reliability and comparability of data. In nearly all cases where countries provide their official production data, these are recorded as reported. However, in the case of issues with the data received, FAO works with the countries to revise their data in order to ensure consistency of the disseminated data. Data are complemented or replaced, when necessary, by information derived from other sources (e.g. regional fisheries management organizations and distant water fleets in exclusive economic zones) in accordance with the standards of the CWP. When no official data are available, unofficial sources may be used. If neither official nor unofficial sources are available, data are imputed. In all cases, disseminated data are flagged accordingly.

Frequency of data collection and acquisition

Yearly

Data collection method

FAO data collection is carried out through collaboration with country correspondents in Member States. The data collection process relies on annual production questionnaires (FishStat-FM) sent to countries, as well as data from national publications and official country websites.

Data validation

Countries are responsible for transmitting data which have already been checked. Validation at FAO concerns any transmission errors and data consistency checks, as well as outlier detection in line with the [FAO statistical standard on data editing and validation of input data](#) and cross check with data from regional fisheries management organizations for selected species. Other validations consist in assessing consistency over the time series, regularity of totals and partial components and correspondence between variables from different data sets. In the case of issues with the data received, FAO works with the countries to revise their data in order to ensure consistency of the disseminated data.

Data compilation

FAO is responsible for compiling the data and generating aggregates.

Regional aggregation

FAO produces global, regional and sub-regional aggregates, in line with the [FAO Statistical Standard Series on Data aggregation](#).

Adjustment

The country correspondents are responsible for the quality of data. FAO validates and eventually corrects country data in consultation with them.

Imputation

Imputations are made according to the [FAO Statistical Standard Series - Imputation \(2023\)](#).

18) Quality management

Quality assurance

FAO is responsible for the quality of internal statistical processes used to compile the published datasets. The [FAO Statistics and Data Quality Assurance Framework \(SDQAF\)](#) provides the necessary principles, guidelines and tools to carry out quality assessments. FAO is performing an internal bi-annual survey (FAO Quality Assessment and Planning Survey) designed to gather information on all of FAO's statistical activities, notably to assess the extent to which quality standards are being implemented with a view to increasing compliance with the quality dimensions of SDQAF, documenting best practices and preparing quality improvement plans, where necessary. Domain-specific quality assurance activities are carried out systematically (e.g. quality reviews, self-assessments, compliance monitoring).

Quality assessment

The quality of FAO statistics is highly dependent upon the accuracy and reliability of the data collected and provided by countries. FAO strives to validate and ensure the quality of official data received by validating and cross checking them. FAO also works with countries to revise their data when appropriate to ensure consistency in the dissemination of official data. In the case of the number of fishers and fish farmers, data may be complemented by other sources (e.g. publications of national statistical offices or responsible ministries) in accordance with the standards of the CWP.

According to the 2025 Quality Assessment and Planning Survey (QAPS) of FAO, the Global fisheries and aquaculture employment statistics data domain reported a quality score of 0.93. According to the QAPS a statistical output is considered of good quality when it reaches a quality score of 0.6 or above.

19) Recommended uses and limitations

Data shows the number of people, and full-time equivalents are not available. Therefore, aggregating data by working time status has to be handled with caution, bearing in mind that an occasional worker will be included with the same weight as a full-time worker. In some cases, the level of disaggregation of the data might change over time. For example, disaggregation by sex or working time status may be available only for certain years. Therefore, the different subseries need to be interpreted with the inclusion of the corresponding "Unspecified" category across time. In addition, there might be some differences in definitions and statistical concepts between countries. Please read the metadata and country notes carefully before starting an analysis.

20) Comment

Not applicable