

Fisheries Tenure, Access and User Rights in the Great Lakes and Inland Water Bodies of the World

24-26 March 2020, Entebbe, Uganda

The Great Lakes and Inland Waterbodies Workshop

In collaboration with the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is co-organizing the global workshop Fisheries Tenure, Access and User Rights in the Great Lakes and Inland Water Bodies of the World, 24 to 26 March in Entebbe, Uganda.

The workshop will explore, in depth, the issues related to tenure, access and user rights in inland fisheries and will enhance the relevance and the user-friendliness of possible measures by identifying and defining the opportunities and options available when talking about governance of tenure in inland fisheries. This has as objective to support the application and use of the VGGT and SSF Guidelines and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Background

Recognizing and allocating tenure, user and access rights has been traditionally considered a necessary step in fishery management for solving the fundamental social, economic and biological problems of overcapitalization and overfishing, but the impacts of tenure, user and access rights recognition and allocation in fisheries go well beyond the sustainable use of the resource and the increase of economic efficiency. Insecure tenure rights and unequal distribution of access to resources may create or exacerbate social issues in fisheries as loss of livelihoods, lower incomes, food insecurity, reduced nutrition and increased conflicts among stakeholders.

Tenure and user rights in fisheries issues have been addressed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through diverse meetings and publications over the last 20 years. There are also two international instruments - Voluntary Guidelines - that are very relevant for fisheries tenure and user rights:

- Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries ([SSF Guidelines](#)) endorsed by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2014, and
- Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security ([VGGT](#)), endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2012.

Given the synergies¹ between these two instruments, there is a need to complement the SSF Guidelines and the VGGT with specific guidance on how to design tenure systems so they can reflect the needs of fishing communities that depend on fisheries resources.²

Recent developments

Two recent events on this topic were Tenure and UserRights in Fisheries 2018: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 ([UserRights 2018](#)), a conference held in Yeosu, Republic of Korea in September 2018 and the Friends of User Rights 2019 ([FoUR 2019](#)) held in Fiumicino, Italy in February 2019.

At both meetings, participants concluded that the issues of tenure and user rights in fisheries have been sufficiently discussed and shared at the global angle. In addition, FoUR 2019 brought broad agreement among participants on the need to develop practical guidance on the options and opportunities for fisheries stakeholders to consider when advancing fisheries tenure and user rights. Such guidance will support and accelerate the application of both the VGGT and the SSF Guidelines at regional, national and local levels.

Current developments

In response to this advice, FAO is organizing a series of workshops to enhance and broaden knowledge about tenure and user rights by sharing knowledge and experiences that will help develop applied guidance on tenure and user rights in fisheries.

To date, two workshops have been held. The first workshop from this series covered [the Bay of Bengal and South East Asia region](#) and was held in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2019. Shortly after, in October 2019, a second covering Latin America and the Caribbean workshop was held in Valparaíso, Chile. During the workshops, participants highlighted that, while there are commonalities between marine and inland capture fisheries, there are specific contexts in inland fisheries that are different from marine capture fisheries. As a result, it was agreed that more work needs to be done for addressing tenure, access and user rights in inland fisheries.

Thus, as part of the workshop series FAO is organizing the workshop Fisheries Tenure, Access and User Rights in the Great Lakes and Inland Water Bodies of the World for exploring, in depth, the issues related to tenure, user and access rights in inland fisheries of the world's great lakes, rivers and water bodies.

¹ Very particularly, Chapter 5 of the SSF Guidelines is about the responsible governance of tenure in small-scale fisheries and resource management, thereby providing context for shaping the application/use of the VGGT.

² 33rd COFI, paragraph 71: The Committee appreciated the Global Work Programme to Advance Knowledge on Rights-based Approaches for Fisheries as a means to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and, more generally, to facilitate the formalization of appropriate access and resource rights in fisheries. It invited FAO to support capacity development for fair and equitable tenure systems.

Purpose & Expected Output

The Workshop's objective is to gather knowledge and information that can help identify how to design and implement appropriate tenure, user and access rights systems in inland fisheries to help accelerate the uptake and application of the VGGT and the SSF Guidelines.

To set the scene and support the discussion, FAO will present a draft background paper on tenure, user and access rights to inland fisheries resources. The paper will introduce different inland fisheries environments, noting their characteristics, including similarities and nuances, along with their current tenure, access and user right systems. The paper will attempt to reveal the issues and challenges present in these environments regarding to tenure, user and access rights.

Participants are expected to comment on the paper's content and to provide their inputs on how the issues and challenges presented can be approached and addressed. Additionally, participants are expected to comment on the feasibility of these approaches and suggest the most suitable ways of developing and providing guidance materials on how to design and implement appropriate tenure, access and user rights in fisheries.

Programme: Process and Results

The workshop will be an interactive event with a programme consisting of:

- **Keynote presentation** on the international framework on tenure and user rights: the VGGT and the SSF Guidelines;
- **Setting the scene** presentation of the background paper. This session will share the background paper findings and will give a chance for the workshop participants to provide inputs on issues and challenges relevant for the purpose of this workshop.
- **Group discussions:** The participants will discuss and report back about different approaches for solving the issues identified in previous sessions. This approach should include roles and responsibilities, the practicality of those approaches and their cost/benefits and should be in line with the contents of the VGGT and SSF Guidelines.
- **Plenary discussions:** The participants will evaluate the feasibility of the approaches proposed during the previous sessions and will discuss on the needs for capacity development, especially guidance material on how to design and implement appropriate tenure, access and user rights.

Participation

The workshop aims to have a wide diversity of stakeholders represented, including fishing and processing sectors, community spokespeople, scientists, authorities, and all groups that are engaged in potentially overlapping activities.

Language

The workshop will be held **in English** due to financial constraints.

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