

Port State Measures to Stop Illegal Fishing in Ghana, Mozambique and Madagascar



Context

Annual global economic losses to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are thought to be as high as \$23.5 billion. Key hotspots for the operations include the tuna and pelagic fisheries in the Indian Ocean and West Africa. Negative impacts on coastal communities dependent on fish as a source of nutrition, employment, and income are severe: dwindling catches, incursions of industrial vessels into restricted areas, and deliberate damage to native vessels and gear. With African countries projected to double their population by 2050, the need to protect Africa's fisheries resources has never been greater.

Port States are responsible under international law to control and monitor fishing vessels entering and using their ports. An effective way to prevent and deter IUU fishing is to deny vessels that are carrying illegally harvested fish access to ports.

This can be achieved through the only globally binding agreement to fight IUU fishing, the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The project "Supporting implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement" promotes application of the PSMA to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in selected African countries.

Our objective

Ghana, Mozambique and Madagascar implement multi-agency port State measures to stop illegally caught fish, illegal fishing vessels and illegal operators entering their ports and operating in their waters.

Activities in Ghana, Mozambique and Madagascar

- **Building the capacity of authorities and inspectors:** Providing training to improve checking, inspecting and taking action against illegal activities.
- **Building trust between different agencies:** Facilitating multi-agency cooperation and collaboration to conduct inspections. This ensures that vessels, fish and operators comply with relevant laws.
- **Developing standard procedures and tools:** Working across national agencies and developing common standard operating procedures. Tools such as inspection apps improve work practices, transparency, and accountability.
- **Connecting ports around Africa:** Establishing the African Ports Network facilitates experience exchange, general communication, and cooperative action to block port access to identified IUU vessels.
- **Supporting legal and policy change:** Ensuring that international obligations are incorporated into legislative frameworks, giving fisheries inspectors the powers and operational capacity to take action against illegal fishing.
- **Creating awareness:** Awareness-raising campaigns to increase knowledge of the national cost of illegal fishing and the role of ports in stopping IUU fishing.



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Region

Ghana, Mozambique, Madagascar

Term

February 2018 to March 2022

Budget

EUR 1.5 million

Implementing partners

Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Ghana
Ministry of Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Mozambique
Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Madagascar

Lead executing agency

The non-governmental organisation Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF)

Target group

Fisheries inspectors
National agencies involved in port controls and the inspections of fishing vessels
Coastal communities who rely on fish for income, employment, food and nutrition

WHERE WE WORK



A real-life example

Port inspections are a useful tool in identifying illegally caught fish and illegal vessels. A sufficiently staffed, adequately trained and well-informed inspectorate is essential for effective implementation of FAO Port State Measures.

To streamline inspections, Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF) worked together closely with national partners. They identified three distinct processes to recognise and take action against illegally caught fish and illegal vessels: 'Check, inspect and act'. SIF now develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for these processes, using officer mentoring on the ground and meetings of interagency groups to discuss current and best practices.

SOP-development focuses particularly on the 'check' process as this can reveal illegal and unauthorised activity. Risk assessment SOPs make it easier for fisheries officers to conduct comprehensive checks and decide on appropriate follow-up action. This includes targeted inspections when high-risk vessels are identified or recommending the denial of port access when IUU vessels are found.

Ongoing training and mentoring for port inspections in Ghana, Mozambique and Madagascar provides the opportunity to integrate SOPs into work practices, review their practicability and collect ideas for further improvement.



In August 2019, the pre-inspection checking procedures were successfully used to identify illegal fishing of a Chinese flagged trawler in Mozambique territorial waters. A targeted inspection and analysis of on-board tracking systems then confirmed the illegal activity. Further identified infractions included the lack of flag state authorization to fish outside of the China Exclusive Economic Zone and incomplete catch logbook entries. As a result, the entire catch was seized.

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