



THE NATIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE POLICY

*Changes proposed to the current fisheries policy,
'to incorporate relevant FAO Voluntary Guidelines for securing
sustainable small scale fisheries in the context of food security
and poverty eradication'*

INTRODUCTION

“Small-scale fisheries make an important contribution to nutrition, food security, sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation – especially in developing countries. Despite this significant contribution, the issues constraining the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries remain poorly understood” (FAO).SL is no exception to this rule.

Small-scale fisheries deserve attention not just for their problems, such as poverty, but also for the opportunities they provide in addressing important societal concerns that exist beyond the sector, such as providing safe and nutritious food and employment. But small-scale fisheries do more than just provide society with a `service`, but they are important in themselves. SSF represent cultural heritage, they offer a way of life, a particular lifestyle that provides both identity and meaning to the lives of those who inhabit them. Some argue that SSF are not always `an occupation of last resort`.

The FAO has recently developed a vision for small-scale fisheries where, a. the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development is fully-realized; b. small-scale fishers and fish workers are not marginalized and, c. importance of small-scale fisheries to national economies and food security is recognized, valued and enhanced. The vision also recognizes that those dependent on the small-scale fisheries sector should be empowered to participate in decision-making with dignity and respect

through integrated management of the social, economic and ecological systems underpinning the sector. The recently developed SSF Voluntary Guidelines capture the inherent features of small scale fisheries by addressing the most compelling issues in SSF, especially, the need to recognize the rights of fishing people and to make the process of fisheries management participatory, inclusive, integrated and holistic with special concern on women and marginalized populations.

All efforts made towards sustainable small scale fisheries, especially by incorporating the relevant SSF Guidelines, would be futile unless they are incorporated into the policy making and planning process. This does not take place automatically. Moreover, they are not blanket recommendations, but guidelines, and what is to be adopted or incorporated into national plans of action depend on specific contexts of countries. Governments have an important role to play in controlling essential legal, financial, technical resources in adopting the most appropriate guidelines. This needs a strong political will to do so. Today many governments in developing countries are moving from “government to governance”, including governance of fisheries. The recent efforts at establishing fisheries co-management platforms in Sri Lanka, is a good example, which is an essential and timely initiative. Such forms of Interactive Governance put pressure on governments to become more accommodating to stakeholder interests and concerns.

In the above context, Sri Lanka Forum for Small Scale Fisheries (SLFSSF) has embarked on a process to implement the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Fisheries (herein after referred to as the ‘Guidelines’), with assistance from International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), as part of FAO efforts towards Global Implementation of the Guidelines. Following the FAO Project Results Matrix, the SLFSSF has developed a plan of activities, which include the following.

1. A Sensitizing workshop for State Actors
2. Development of communication tools for community stakeholders
3. Assessment of current policy to identify changes required in the context of implementing the Guidelines
4. Stakeholder meetings in various parts of the country: awareness building and capacity building.
5. Policy workshop to propose changes to National Policy and National Plan of Action.

The first four activities have already been completed and this policy paper forms a component of the fifth activity; the Policy Workshop. This paper has been prepared from the results obtained from the stakeholder workshops carried out in 12 coastal districts of the country; Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mullativu, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Puttlam, Chilaw, and Negombo. Information have been analysed and a number of policy implications emerging therefrom are indicated in the paper. These policy implications have been discussed with a group of policy experts and an array of policy strategies have been prepared, which are expected to be incorporated into the current national fisheries policy. Today’s workshop aims at finalizing the policy strategies and to improve the national fisheries policy that would help to secure a sustainable fisheries sector in Sri Lanka.

MAJOR THEMES UNDER WHICH THE POLICY STRATEGIES ARE DISCUSSED

1. *Tenure Rights*
2. *Sustainable Resource Management*
3. *Fish Value Chain*
4. *Food Security Food Safety and Nutrition*
5. *Social Development*
6. *Occupational Health and Safety*
7. *Social Protection and Fisheries Insurance*
8. *Disaster Risk and Climate Change*
9. *Capacity Development*
10. *Gender in fisheries*
11. *Empowering Community Organisations*
12. *Blue Economy*
13. *Other*

Policy Statements (Principles)

A. National Fisheries Policy (existing)	B. Proposed Strategies (emerging from SSF Guidelines)
1. TENURE RIGHTS	
1.1A Recognition and protection of the tenure rights of the fishing communities to land, water and fish resources	1.1B <i>Identification, recording and protection of traditional and customary rights of fishers to the fish resources, the beach and adjoining lands</i>
	1.2B <i>Promotion of zonal plans to ensure sustainability of major economic activities including fisheries</i>
2. SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
2.1 General	
2.1.1A Ensure sustainable management of the living marine resources based on the best available evidence from social, economic and ecological sciences.	2.1.1B <i>A strong MCS process in all waters for fisheries and aquaculture in collaboration with other appropriate agencies,</i>
2.1.2A Application of ecosystem based management and precautionary approaches for responsible fisheries management.	2.1.2B <i>Promotion of area-specific co management platforms with cross sectoral collaboration, ensuring that they are participatory, integrated, inclusive and holistic.</i>
	2.1.3B <i>Rules and Guidelines for fisheries management formulated through holistic and integrated approaches</i>

2.1.3.A Enhancement of stocks of endangered, threatened and protected species	2.1.4B <i>Intervention to minimize overlapping policies and mandates among institutions responsible for coastal resources development, management and conservation</i>
2.1.4A Protection of resources in Sri Lankan water from IUU fishing	
2.1.5A Application of temporal and spatial planning	
2.1.6A Use management information systems for planning, development, management and reporting	
2.1.7A Application of co-governance and management processes where appropriate	
2.1.8A Promotion fishing for under-exploited and unexploited fish resources	
2.2 Marine & Coastal	
2.2.1A fish stocks enhancement in the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) by ranching and habitat improvement	2.2.1B <i>Promotion of cross sectoral collaboration towards Integrated Coastal Zone Management</i>
2.2.2A Prevention of overcapacity of the fishing fleet.	
2.2.3A Diversion of marine and coastal fishing efforts from over-exploited areas to unexploited or under-exploited areas.	2.2.3B <i>Prevention of fisheries and aquaculture based environment pollution</i>
2.2.4A Promotion of fishing practices that cause the least impact on resources and the environment.	
2.2.5A Strengthen prevention of fishing by foreign fishing vessels in Sri Lankan waters.	

2.2.6A Compliance with international treaties concerning responsible Fisheries management.	
2.2.7A Conditions to limit entry of new national high-seas fishing boats based on internationally accepted protocols in navigation, fish detection, harvesting, preservation, post harvest technology etc.	
2.2.8A Royalty for exploitation of fish stocks in the EEZ of Sri Lanka by local fishing boats	
2.2.9A Fee for allocation of fish catch quotas to local fishing vessels fishing in high seas,	
2.3 Inland and Aquaculture	
2.3.1A Conservation of aquatic biodiversity in inland waters.	
2.3.2A Regulation of fishing fleet characteristics for lagoons and estuaries,	
2.3.3A Prohibition of motorized boats fishing in reservoirs.	
2.3.4A Environmental and socio-economic impact assessments for allocation of land and water resources for aquaculture projects	
2.3.5A Use of bio-safety and best management practices in aquaculture	
3. FISH VALUE CHAIN	
3.1 Pre-Harvest Sector	
3.1.1A Management of the possible overcapacity of the fishing fleet.	
3.1.2A Improvement of quality assurance of fishing vessels.	

3.1.3A Improvement of the fisheries forecasting system for fishers to obtain information on locations for productive fishing.	
3.1.4A Improvement of quality infrastructure facilities in the production and supply chain	<i>3.1.1B Promoting the provision of suitable space and facilities for craft anchorage, fish drying and fishing equipment storage etc</i>
3.1.5A Private sector involvement in the investment and operation of fisheries infrastructure facilities.	
3.1.6A Promotion of communities in the operation and maintenance of anchorages and minor fish landing sites	
3.1.7A Promotion of managing fishery harbours by the CHFC under the “green fishery harbour” concept	
3.2 Harvest Sector	
3.2.1 General	
3.2.1.1A Promotion of investments in export-oriented fisheries and aquaculture projects.	
3.2.1.2A Promotion of the production of fish and fishery products in compliance with international standards through supply chain management	
3.2.1.3A Promotion of fisheries and aquaculture as appropriate	
3.2.1.4A Promotion of the import and culture of new exotic species that have the potential for export	
3.2.15A Promotion of the production and export of ornamental fish and aquatic ornamental plants.	

3.2.1.6A	Promotion of a market driven production of fisheries and aquaculture products including innovative products	
3.2.1.7A	Promotion of the production of high valued eco-friendly fishery products	
3.2.1.8A	Provision of assistance for branding of Sri Lankan fishery products	
3.2.2 Marine		
3.2.2.1A	Promotion of fishing for un-exploited or under-exploited fish stocks in EEZ.	
3.2.2.2A	Promote the use of locally produced bait including live bait	
3.2.2.3A	Promotion of foreign fish landings in a responsible manner in accordance with the relevant international treaties.	
3.2.3 Inland and Aquaculture		
3.2.3.1A	Development of aquaculture eco-friendly approaches	
3.2.3.2A	Promotion of the culture of indigenous species, and new exotic species in compliance with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Practice for the Introduction of Aquatic Species.	
3.2.3.3A	Genetic improvement of the performance of fish species used for aquaculture with the application of the precautionary principle	
3.3 Post-Harvest Sector		
3.3.1A	Development of awareness on best fish handling practices	<i>3.3.1B Provision of facilities for scientific fish handling and storage at landing sites</i>

3.3.2A Working towards trade agreements that will improve the access to all export products including fisheries and aquaculture products in identified or prioritized international markets	3.3.2B <i>Intervention in fish marketing and increase competition in fish buying towards ensuring a fair price to fish producers</i>
	3.3.3B <i>Provision of fishing communities with access to information on fish export market</i>
	3.3.4B <i>Promotion of entry of community organisations into fish marketing and establish export market links</i>

4. FOOD SECURITY, FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION

4.1A Creation of employment with adequate income levels in the sector to ensure food security of more people	4.1B <i>Regulation of foreign trade to ensure that food and nutritional security of the people is not threatened by international trade in fish and fish products</i>
4.2A Ensuring the quality and food safety of locally marketed fish and fishery products	
4.3A Promotion of the consumption of sufficient fish for meeting nutritional requirements	
4.4A Stocking fish as buffer stocks during gluts to ensure the availability of fish at reasonable prices during lean periods.	
4.5A Ensuring the traceability and transparency at all stages of the value chain process	

5. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1A Adopting measures to prevent alcoholism in fishing communities	5.1B <i>According priority to children of fisher communities to enter higher education in fisheries, and giving priority with their excellence, during recruitment for employment in the fishery related institutions</i>
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5.2A Ensuring that adequate compensation is provided to fisher communities who will be affected by development activities in the respective areas	<i>5.2B Provision of financial assistance to needy children from fisher families to continue education during off season</i>
5.3A Promotion of investment in human resource development such as health, education, literacy and digital inclusion in fishing communities	<i>5.3B Promotion of the development of credit and micro-credit schemes to encourage investment in fisheries and to enable the poor and vulnerable to access credit.</i>
5.4A Progressive realization of rights of the small scale fishers and fishworkers to an adequate standard of living in accordance with the national and international human right standards	<i>5.4B Building awareness among people of Sri Lanka of the importance of the SSF sector and recognition of fishing as respectable vocation.</i>
5.5A Working towards the generation of more employment opportunities in the sector where possible	
5.6A Continuing to implement poverty alleviation programs that provides sustainable livelihoods	
6. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY	
6.1A Ensuring safe, healthy and fair working conditions at sea and on land in accordance with international standards.	<i>6.1B Ensuring safe, healthy and fair working conditions at sea, inland waters and on land</i>
6.2A Promotion of the establishment of insurance schemes concerning safety at sea and occupational safety	<i>6.2B Building awareness among fishers on the importance of adopting sea safety measures</i>
	<i>6.3B Assisting fishers in acquiring safety equipment</i>
	<i>6.4B Provision of land-based equipment and facilities for easy navigation of fishing crafts</i>

	<i>6.5B Investment in the construction / development of proper anchorages and landing sites with basic infrastructure facilities for marine and inland fishing villages</i>
	<i>6.6B Ratification of ILO Conventions on Safety and Work in the fishing sector and, incorporation of the relevant provisions to ensure safety and fair working conditions in the fisheries sector</i>
7. SOCIAL PROTECTION AND FISHERIES INSURANCE	
7.1A Improvement of the social safety net and social security protection for the fishers and fish workers including women	<i>7.1B Provision of social protection through effective fisheries pension schemes and fisheries insurance schemes</i>
	<i>7.2B Establishment of Fisheries Insurance Schemes jointly with Fisheries Community Organisations to minimize informational asymmetries</i>
	<i>7.3B Promotion of fisheries insurance schemes that cover fishing and climate related risks causing full and partial damages to fishing crafts and gear, coastal assets, illhealth and loss of life</i>
8. DISASTER RISK AND CLIMATE CHANGE	
8.1A Development of a strategy to address the environmental and climatic-change challenges, and impacts of natural disasters	<i>8.1B Promotion of research towards predicting the shifting of breeding, migration of fish stocks due to climatic change effects</i>

8.2A Taking precautions to prevent marine pollution given its direct adverse impacts on fish and other living marine aquatic resources	8.2B <i>Establishment of early warning systems for small scale fishers based on coastal district</i>
8.3A Provision of assistance to the communities affected by disasters to resettle and recommence livelihoods	8.3B <i>Provision of fishers with access to weather data through mobile phone based weather information system</i>
8.4A Provision of assistance to the communities affected by disasters to resettle and recommence livelihoods	8.4B <i>Registration of fishers, crafts and fishing equipment with regular update of information on annual basis,</i>
8.5A Development of peoples' resilience capacity to cope with climatic change impacts	8.5B <i>Involvement of community organizations on disaster management,</i>
8.6A Improvement of research work and institutional involvement to fill the information gaps and developing a database on climate change related issues	
9. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT	
9.1A Building the capacity of fishers and ensuring their effective participation in fisheries management	9.1B <i>Designing and conducting training courses in fish farming</i>
9.2A Provision of training and capacity building programmes	9.2B <i>Building capacities of members of fishing communities in new fishing techniques, deep sea fishing technology, alternative livelihoods and, resource conservation and management,</i>
9.3A Encouraging communities to commence business activities including integrated sustainable tourism	9.3B <i>Training of women & school drop outs in fishing communities in post-harvest processing and other ancillary activities related to fisheries</i>
9.4A Motivation of communities to commence aquaculture or culture-based fisheries as income activities in wetland areas associated with their villages	9.4B <i>Training of government officials and community leaders on the principles of co-management</i>

9.5A Train school leavers in advanced technology related to fisheries, aquaculture and new marine industries targeting employment	
9.6A Train skippers and crew members for foreign employment	
10. GENDER IN FISHERIES	
10.1A Promotion of equal opportunities for women's participation in the activities of the sector	<i>10.1B Building awareness among fishing communities on the right of women to take up employment either directly or indirectly in small scale fisheries</i>
10.2A Making gender mainstreaming an integral part of small scale fisheries development strategies	<i>10.2B Ensuring a minimum of 25 percent representation of women in the 'committee of office bearers' of fisheries community organisations.</i>
10.3A Creation of conditions for both men and women to have equal access to resources and benefits	<i>10.3B Removal of discrepancies in wages paid to men and women in the fisheries sector</i>
10.5A Assisting women in fisher communities to set up micro-business enterprises with special attention to widows	
11. EMPOWERING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS	
11.1A Recognition, empowerment and strengthening of fisheries cooperatives in addressing issues in fisheries and fisher wellbeing, and in representing fishing communities at decision making platforms	<i>11.1B Provision of training for officials of fisheries cooperatives in resource conservation and management, financial management and principles of cooperation</i>
11.2A Liaising with fisheries cooperatives in integrated coastal zone management	<i>11.2B Channelling of all public assistance to fishing communities through fisheries cooperatives ensuring the benefits to the end users.</i>

	<p><i>11.3B Consultation of Fisheries Cooperatives in the design, planning and implementation of fisheries and other development projects</i></p>
	<p><i>11.4B Dissemination of Policy documents, laws, rules and regulations in a manner fisheries communities understand easily</i></p>

The following of the current National Fisheries Policy remain unchanged

12. BLUE ECONOMY

- 13.1 Promotion of the establishment of new marine industries utilizing living marine resources.
- 13.2 Regulation of access to marine bioprospecting with equitable sharing of benefits.
- 13.3 Promotion of integration of marine activities to ensure maximum efficiency,
- 13.4 Promotion of recreational fisheries without conflicting with mainstream fisheries.
- 13.5 Promotion of the establishment of marinas and marine-based tourism activities.
- 13.6 Conservation of ship wrecks for enhancement of fish stocks and promotion of tourism.
- 13.7 Application of the “green-harbour concept” in development and management of fishery harbours.
- 13.8 Promotion of conservation of the marine and coastal environment.

14. OTHER

14.1 Compliance with Regional and International Obligations

- 14.1.1 Participating actively in the regional and international fisheries management forums.
- 14.1.2 Complying with fisheries management measures stipulated in international treaties and by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO)s.
- 14.1.3 Cooperating with other coastal states directly and through RFMOs for conservation and management of highly migratory and straddling fish stocks.
- 14.1.4 Cooperating with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in conservation and management of fisheries resources.
- 14.1.5 Complying with the requirements stipulated in international labour conventions and international maritime conventions in regard to maritime labour.

14.1.6 Provision of port access and assistance as a port State in accordance with the international law to foreign fishing vessels in distress.

14.2 Financial Facilities

14.2.1 Encouragement of private financial institutions to develop financial instruments to ensure financial inclusion for fishers.

14.2.2 Encouragement of fisher communities to deal with banks and other formal credit institutions for their financial requirements.

14.3 Private Sector Participation

14.3.1 Promotion of the private sector participation in the sector.

14.3.2 Promotion of the establishment of public – private partnerships (PPPs) for investment in the sector.

14.3.3 Promotion of the construction of fishing vessels, recreational vessels and - other vessels for export

14.4 Human Rights

14.4.1 Ensuring that no human rights are violated in development and management of fisheries and aquaculture.

14.5 Anti-Corruption

Working towards the prevention of corruption and economic fraud including fish-laundering in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.