

# A Robust Platform

The database SSF-LEX provides detailed information on the legal and policy frameworks governing small-scale fisheries across several countries

The 10th anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) is just the occasion to celebrate and highlight SSF-LEX, a tool that supports their implementation. National policies and legal frameworks should address many issues highlighted

framework that recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries.

## SSF-LEX's contents: country profiles

The SSF-LEX homepage provides users with a list of national policies and legislation specifically mentioning the SSF Guidelines. Currently, 20 countries and the EU have been identified to have laws and policies incorporating the Guidelines. Additionally, users can find information on FAO legal guidance aimed at advancing their implementation. It includes a policy and legal diagnostic tool for sustainable SSF; a legislative guide titled 'Legislating for Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries'; and an e-learning module on legal and policy considerations for sustainable SSF. The tab 'select a country' on the home page allows users to find country profiles that analyse the national legal and policy frameworks.

SSF-LEX contains country profiles that are meticulously structured against the Guidelines, offering comprehensive information on various aspects relevant to SSF. The profiles are divided into seven sections. Each profile begins with an introduction presenting data on the marine sector and employment across the value chain, fleet and production. The profiles in section two list relevant international, regional and bilateral instruments and agreements to which the country is a party. This aims to emphasize the need for policy coherence with international law and instruments, for example, by integrating ratified instruments within national legal frameworks.

Section three examines each country's constitution in relation to the SSF Guidelines and their principles, such as human rights and dignity, gender equality and respect for cultures. Section four details the main

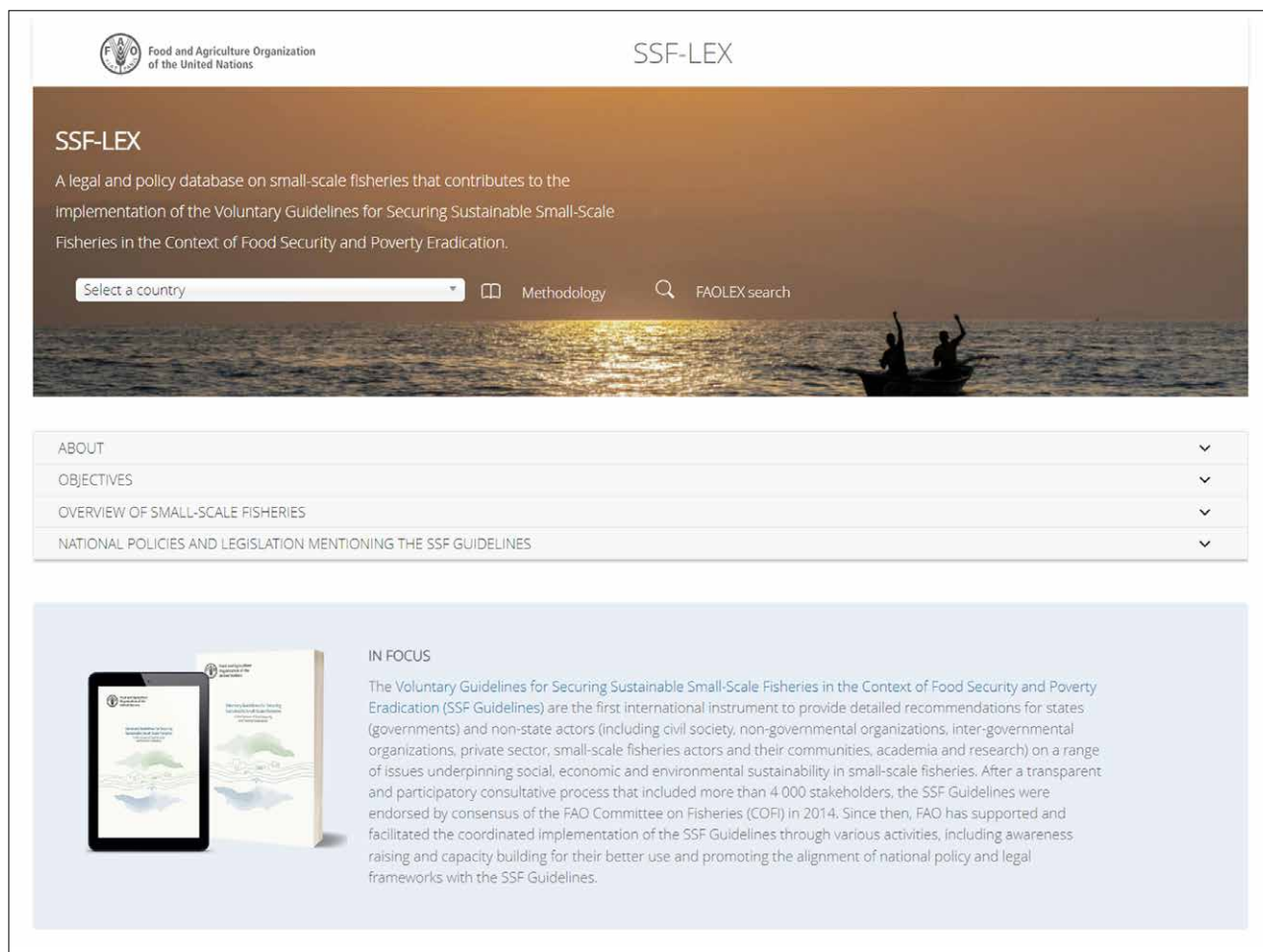
in the SSF Guidelines to the greatest extent possible. Legislation provides the strongest possible framework for fisheries governance; it facilitates resource management; empowers and protects right holders; and serves to hold duty bearers accountable. Moreover, it facilitates implementation and enforcement of international and regional instruments into national legislation.

SSF-LEX, a specialized subset of FAOLEX, is a database dedicated to the small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector. It provides detailed information on the legal and policy frameworks governing SSF across several countries, facilitating access to crucial legal and policy instruments.

SSF-LEX also supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); it can be used as a tool for monitoring and reporting on SDG 14.b, specifically, indicator 14.b.1 that tracks progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional

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**SSF-LEX**

A legal and policy database on small-scale fisheries that contributes to the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

Select a country  Methodology  FAOLEX search

- ABOUT
- OBJECTIVES
- OVERVIEW OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES
- NATIONAL POLICIES AND LEGISLATION MENTIONING THE SSF GUIDELINES

**IN FOCUS**

The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) are the first international instrument to provide detailed recommendations for states (governments) and non-state actors (including civil society, non-governmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations, private sector, small-scale fisheries actors and their communities, academia and research) on a range of issues underpinning social, economic and environmental sustainability in small-scale fisheries. After a transparent and participatory consultative process that included more than 4 000 stakeholders, the SSF Guidelines were endorsed by consensus of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2014. Since then, FAO has supported and facilitated the coordinated implementation of the SSF Guidelines through various activities, including awareness raising and capacity building for their better use and promoting the alignment of national policy and legal frameworks with the SSF Guidelines.

government institutions responsible for SSF and their mandates. This can inform how to promote policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaboration. Section five deals with definitions, analysing how countries define SSF and related terms in their laws and policies, where such definitions exist, as some countries may not have specific definitions of such terms.

Fisheries legislation and policies relevant to SSF are tackled in section six; it analyses the main fisheries legislation and policy in the country and provides a brief analysis of the main relevant provisions. Section seven is on the national regulatory framework; it is divided by topics based on the thematic areas of the SSF Guidelines, namely, governance of tenure, sustainable resource management and conservation, social development, employment and decent work, value chains, post-harvest and trade, gender

equality, and disaster risks and climate change. In this section, users will find an analysis of the legislation and policies relevant to each of these topics. Such legislation and policies may or may not be specific to fisheries. Each section concludes with a list of relevant legislation and policies, with links to the original instrument.

#### Development process

It's worth our while to consider examples of information reflecting the SSF Guidelines, and their provisions, found in SSF-LEX country profiles. Some examples:

**Senegal:** The profile illustrates the constitutional commitment to a healthy environment and explains how the work of the CLPA (conseils locaux de peche artisanale) is a space for uniting small-scale fishers and stakeholders for better resource management and conflict resolution. The Senegal

fisheries policy recognizes the role of women in small-scale fisheries.

**Morocco:** Small-scale fishers are categorized as professionals, thanks to a provision dating back to 1922 stating that all seafarers, including small-scale fishers, must have a seamen's book. Morocco boasts eight Maritime Professional Qualification Centres, ensuring small-scale fishers are trained.

**Oman:** Article 22 of Oman's fisheries law emphasizes marine safety, data provision and control systems for artisanal fishers. Omani artisanal fishers follow the 'Senate Al-Bahar', a set of community-agreed practices. While not formalized, the fisheries law sometimes leans on it for guidance.

**Solomon Islands:** The Fisheries Management Act recognizes customary rights and ensures access for customary fishing. Indigenous Solomon Islanders have the right to fish in waters where they are entitled by custom to fish. Fisheries management regulations require fisheries licence holders not to cause destruction to a customary rights area.

SSF-LEX country profiles are developed through a comprehensive process. They are drafted based on information from FAOLEX and other relevant sources, and reviewed by national experts to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness. This methodology ensures that the profiles provide a reliable and thorough analysis of the legal and policy frameworks relevant for small-scale fisheries.

The list of legislation and policies is updated with the data automatically retrieved from FAOLEX, ensuring that SSF-LEX stays up to date with the most current legal and policy documents.

#### Using SSF-LEX

SSF-LEX is designed for user-friendly navigation, allowing users to easily access various country profiles as well as a curated list of relevant legal and policy instruments. The platform also has a comparison feature allowing users to compare the legal frameworks of different countries side by side, identifying best practices and policy gaps. This feature is particularly beneficial for identifying successful policies and regulatory approaches

that could be adapted or adopted in other contexts, aiding stakeholders in understanding how other countries legislate for the SSF sector, harmonizing national regulations with international standards and guidelines, and supporting research and advocacy efforts.

The database can serve a diverse range of stakeholders, including governments and civil society organizations, by providing comprehensive and accessible legal and policy information pertinent to SSF. It can be used to inform the development of targeted policies and legislative reforms in support of SSF, fishworkers and their organizations. Additionally, it raises awareness of existing legislation and policies in a country that require better implementation.

It assists users in understanding the rights of small-scale fishers and their communities, as well as the obligations of governments and other actors towards small-scale fisheries. It also assists users in understanding how national legislation and policies align with some of the provisions in the SSF Guidelines, helping in the identification of gaps and good practices.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the SSF Guidelines, SSF-LEX stands out as a robust platform supporting small-scale fisheries. Its user-friendly interface, detailed country profiles and powerful comparison feature make it an invaluable resource for governments, policymakers, researchers and small-scale fishers.

#### For more

##### SSF-LEX website

<https://ssfex.fao.org/>

##### SSF Guidelines

<https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/en>

##### SDG Indicators Data Portal

<https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals-data-portal/data/indicators/14b1-access-rights-for-small-scale-fisheries/en>

##### Legislating for sustainable small-scale fisheries

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a3578713-85a4-411d-8ac2-fc413ab97e49/content>

##### A policy and legal diagnostic tool for sustainable small-scale fisheries

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c6841088-5d0a-4804-9b34-71977f6ad524/content>

##### FAO elearning Academy

<https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=881>