

**Validation Workshop of the
Study on the Registration
System
for Sustainable Small-Scale
Fisheries in the South-West
Indian Ocean region**

20th - 21st May 2024 |
Antananarivo – Madagascar

OVERVIEW OF THE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES (SSF) IN MAURITIUS

- ▶ The Ministry of Blue Economy is working to establish itself as a significant economic pillar while contributing to food security, job creation, import reduction and export promotion with focus on the protection, and conservation of marine resources and marine ecosystems.
- ▶ The main strategy and policy of the Ministry of the Blue Economy remains the development of the Blue economy into a major pole of socio economic growth within the framework of good governance and sustainability.
- ▶ The promotion and conservation of marine aquatic organisms remain one of the main objectives of the fisheries division.
- ▶ **Key Objectives**
- ▶ Ensure long term benefits of the sustainable use of marine resources
- ▶ Develop local capacity in the Blue Economy,

POLICY ORIENTATION IN THE SSF

- BENEFITS TO PROFESSIONAL FISHERS

- ▶ Bad Weather Allowance
- ▶ Closed season Allowance for large and Gill net fishers
- ▶ Insurance cover of all registered fishers
- ▶ Compensation of € 4,000 in case of death or disappearance at sea
- ▶ Grant € 1,000 each year for the purchase of basket traps
- ▶ Grant of € 50 each year for the purchase of hooks
- ▶ “Cannotte” scheme for the purchase of ‘cannotte’ and other equipment associated with. Grant up to a ceiling of € 6,000.
- ▶ A grant of € 120,000 to cooperatives employing at least three registered fishers for the acquisition of a fishing vessel to fish in our EEZ
- ▶ Scheme for the surrendering of fisher card at the age of 65 and above or because of serious health issues Compensation of € 2,000
- ▶ Relinquishment of fishing license by large and gill net owners against compensation

POLICY ORIENTATION IN THE SSF

- BENEFITS TO PROFESSIONAL FISHERS

- ▶ Surrendering of fisher card of large net and gill net fishers.
- ▶ Scholarships to wards of registered fishers
- ▶ Funeral grant of € 200
- ▶ Maternity Allowance for a period of 3 months - € 200 each month
- ▶ Allowance to fishers who have been admitted to hospital for a consecutive period 3 to 14 days at the same rate as Bad weather allowance. € 13 per day
- ▶ Issue of safety and security equipment to registered fishers-Life jackets, bailers it, electric torchlight etc
- ▶ Issue of Ice cooler box
- ▶ Installation of Ice making machines at 8 fish landing stations
- ▶ The Ministry has recently introduced a closure for octopus to allow the replenishment in our lagoon. The closure takes place from 15 January to 15 March followed by another closure from 15 August to 15 October each year. This has been implemented to allow mature female octopuses to spawn and replenish the stock.

POLICY ORIENTATION IN THE SSF

- BENEFITS TO PROFESSIONAL FISHERS

- ▶ There has been a deployment of 28 anchored FADs in year 2022-2023 including 6 smart FADs equipped with satellite buoys.
- ▶ There is a long term monitoring of coral reefs eco-system. The Ministry have come forward with the plantation of corals which is a natural habitat for fish.
- ▶ There has also been a propagation of mangrove plants to act as a habitat and shelter for crabs and other crustaceans.
- ▶ Crackdown operations have been intensified to deter and eliminate illegal fishing for the benefit of honest fishers. This will also contribute to the enhancement of our marine ecosystem and raise the standard of living of our fisher community.
- ▶ Fingerlings such as seabream have been released at sea. These fingerlings are produced in a hatchery and stocked in the ponds of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre for release. We have recently released 55000 fingerlings.

POLICY ORIENTATION IN THE SSF

- BENEFITS TO PROFESSIONAL FISHERS

- ▶ The Ministry has recently empowered artisanal fishers to sell their own catch. We are now entertaining applications for fishmonger license in respect of registered fishers only.
- ▶ The Ministry has come forward with the issue of ice cooler box to artisanal fishers to add value to their catch.
- ▶ The safety and security of fishers has become more important due to climate change. The Ministry will soon come forward with the issue of VHF radios, satellite communication devices and other safety and security equipment.

PROFILE OF FISHERMAN AND THE FISHING UNITS

- ▶ As at date, there are 1,845 artisanal registered fishers.
- ▶ Most of these artisanal fishers are above 50 years
- ▶ We have recruited 481 newly registered fishers. We are planning to recruit 500 additional fishers before the end of this year
- ▶ There are only 10 fishers that are engaged in banks fishing. The number of bank fisherman have constantly decreased. In year 1996 there were approximately 1000 bank fishermen. Most of the fishing vessels that were involved in bank fishing for a continuous period of 40 days or more have phased out.
- ▶ There are 1,163 artisanal fishing boats registered with our Ministry.
- ▶ There are 79 ACF boats registered in Mauritius.
- ▶ We have an area of 240 sq km of lagoon in Mauritius
- ▶ An exclusive economic zone of 2.3 M sq Km.

REGISTRATION OF FISHERS IN THE SSF SECTOR

- ▶ The applicant fisher shall not be less than 18 years and not more than 50 years at the time of application
- ▶ The applicant shall be neither engaged in gainful employment nor be holder of a trade license or any remunerative license
- ▶ The applicant shall submit a valid certificate of character
- ▶ The applicant fisher shall submit a recommendation letter form the registered fishers in whose boat he/she is fishing
- ▶ The fishing activities of the applicant shall be monitored for a period of six(6) consecutive months and the fisher shall have fished for more than 75% of the fishing days excluding bad weather days, Sundays and public holidays in any month
- ▶ The applicant fisher shall be medically fit to work at sea as certified by a government medical officer
- ▶ The applicant shall have a certified swimming skills
- ▶ The eligible fisher shall be required to successfully complete the General Fisher Course conducted by the Ministry responsible for fisheries, as approved by the accounting officer , to be registered as an artisanal fisher.

LEGISLATION IN PLACE

- ▶ A new Fisheries Act has been proclaimed on 18th November 2023. The following legislations mentioned below have been addressed mainly to artisanal fishers. A new fixed penalty has been introduced for those offences which are not considered as severe.
- ▶ 1. Prohibition to fish, store, land, sell, possess or do illegal activity with specific species of fish- Rs 5000
- ▶ 2. Selling or having in possession for sale any fish without a valid fishmonger license.- Rs 5000
- ▶ 3. Engaging in fishing as an artisanal fisher without being registered as a registered fisher- Rs 5000
- ▶ 4. Not being in possession of fisher identity card while carrying fishing or fishing related activities.- Rs 2000
- ▶ 5. Landing catch at a place other than at the fish landing station where fishing vessel is registered.- Rs 5000
- ▶ 6. Mooring fishing vessel outside prescribed distance for landing purposes. -Rs 5000
- ▶ 7. Storing catch in any manner or place not approved.- Rs 5000
- ▶ 8. Mooring fishing vessel in place not approved while fishing vessel not on fishing trip.- Rs 5000

LEGISLATION IN PLACE

- ▶ 9. Manufacture, import, sale or supply of any gear except basket trap, fish spear, line, rod, reel or lure without valid licence. - Rs 5000
- ▶ 10. Using or possessing bait gear, canard net, gill net, large net, pocket net or shrimp net without being the holder of a valid gear licence. - Rs 5000
- ▶ 11. Failure to surrender gear on lapsing of gear licence. - Rs 5000
- ▶ 12. Replacing licensed gear without a valid authorization. -Rs 5000
- ▶ 13. Possession of net or gear exceeding authorised length or having mesh size less than authorised. - Rs 5000
- ▶ 14. Engaging in underwater fishing without a valid licence. - Rs 5000
- ▶ 15. Operating net fishery without holder of a fisher card. -Rs 5000
- ▶ 16. Where a person elects to accept a fixed penalty notice, the Fisheries Enforcement Officer shall forfeit any equipment or any other article used in contravention of the offence.
- ▶ 17. Where a person who has been served with a fixed penalty notice fails to pay the appropriate fixed penalty within the time limit, criminal proceedings are instituted against him for the offence in respect of which he was served with the FPN, he shall, on conviction be liable to a fine which shall not be less than twice the fixed penalty in respect of that offence.

CONSTRAINTS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN THE SSF-OPEN ACCESS ?

- ▶ There have been a considerable decrease in the catch per unit effort of artisanal fishers. Our lagoons have been depleted and artisanal fishers have to venture off-lagoon to earn their living. To operate off-lagoon the artisanal fishers have to acquire new boats that offers more security at sea. The price of these new fishing vessels are very exorbitant and not affordable to artisanal fishers.
- ▶ They have to acquire new outboard engines which are expensive and they have to use additional fuel to venture off-lagoon.
- ▶ The artisanal fishers requires more training to change their alternative mode of fishing. The Fisheries Training Extension Centre in Mauritius caters for the training of all the artisanal fishers. Training is ongoing to the benefit of all the artisanal fishers. They are introduced to new techniques in fishing.
- ▶ There are many fishers who have become old and are reluctant to follow these trainings and prefer to stick with their traditional way of fishing.
- ▶ Our Ministry have come forward with various schemes such as “Cannotte” Scheme but there are many artisanal fishers who do not want to take advantage of this scheme.
- ▶ Fingerlings such as seabream have been released at sea. These fingerlings are produced in a hatchery and stocked in the ponds of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre for release. We have recently released 55000 fingerlings. The chance of survival of these fingerlings is minimal due to illegal fishing.

CONSTRAINTS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN THE SSF-OPEN ACCESS ?

- ▶ A lot of sensitization program has been designed to encourage artisanal fishers to take advantage of the “Cannotte” Scheme and also to regroup themselves into cooperative to make acquisition of these fishing vessels. But there are many fishermen and fishers who do not want to take advantage of these schemes mostly because of cultural, and socio-economic aspects.
- ▶ The safety and security of fishers has become more important due to climate change. The Ministry is coming forward with the issue of VHF radios and other communication device.
- ▶ Huge sums of money are paid to artisanal fishers as bad weather allowance. Due to a lack of staff, we cannot have overall control over the activities of registered fishers.
- ▶ The landings of artisanal fishers cannot be properly monitored. There are many artisanal fishers who set out for fishing during the night and their catch cannot be monitored.
- ▶ We do not have a proper record of the catch data of amateur fishers.

CONSTRAINTS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN THE SSF-OPEN ACCESS ?

- ▶ A stock of 6000 tons of fish off lagoon is available. Only 1500 tons are being fished. We have encouraged artisanal fishers to regroup themselves in cooperative to exploit these resources. Unfortunately because of paperwork and administrative procedures, it takes a long time for these artisanal fishers to benefit of these schemes.
- ▶ The main problem is that the enforcement arm of the Ministry is not well equipped to combat illegal fishing. We have a lack of staff and appropriate logistics
- ▶ The Ministry has come forward with a hotline that operates 24/7 to combat illegal fishing. However, due to security reasons, the artisanal fishers do not make use of the hotline.

WAY FORWARD

- ▶ We have to speed up procedures for acquisition of both “Cannotte” and semi-industrial fishing vessels.
- ▶ We have to introduce a computerized system for registration of boats and fishers as well as recording of catch data
- ▶ We have to intensify our sensitization programs to encourage artisanal fishers to take advantage of the various schemes set up to improve the standard of living.
- ▶ We have to recruit additional staff and acquire appropriate logistics with the newest technology to combat illegal fishing.
- ▶ We have to sensitize artisanal fishers on the new provisions in the new Fisheries Act.
- ▶ We have to encourage artisanal fishers to make use of our hotline to assist us in combatting illegal fishing.
- ▶ We have to deliver proper training to our officers and create awareness on our heritage to mankind so as to sensitise them on the importance of protection of our marine resources.

▶ **THANK YOU**