

Minutes of the Working Group for Small-scale Fisheries

MEETING TITLE	Kick-off call Working Group for Small-scale Fisheries
MEETING PURPOSE (AGENDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions on objectives of the group and on the role of the Secretariat; • Discussions based on background document sent to members of the working group in advance of the discussion.
MEETING DATE	01.12.2015
MEETING TIME	15.00 – 16.45 (Berlin time)
MEETING LOCATION	Skype
ATTENDEES (BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sven Biermann (FiTI Secretariat) • Andréa Durighello (FiTI Secretariat) • Jean-Louis Kromer (African Development Bank) • André Standing (Advisor to the FiTI) • Sebastian Wegner (FiTI Secretariat) • Rolf Willmann (Independent Expert – former FAO)
EXCUSED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaoussou Gueye (CAOPA) • Mechthild Kronen (GIZ)
PRESENTATION	Input document by FiTI Secretariat prepared by André Standing (distributed before the call)
MEETING MINUTES FROM	07.12.2015

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKING GROUP

- Sven Biermann started the kick-off call of the Working Group on Small-scale Fisheries by introducing the objectives of the Group, namely to
 - Develop recommendations for the International Advisory Group on how small-scale fisheries can be included into the FiTI reporting elements and procedures.
- He also reiterated that the goal of these meetings should be to present the results of the Working Group at the next Advisory Group meeting on February 4th in Nouakchott, Mauritania.
- He also mentioned the role of the FiTI Secretariat in the Working Group. The role of the Secretariat will be to:
 - Coordinate all operational aspects of the Working Group (including one regular call every month); and
 - To conduct any additional outreach or research activities (or others) that the participants would deem it necessary.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- An initial comment raised was the need to think ‘out of the box’, in particular with respect to small-scale fisheries, and avoid following closely the design of EITI. It was explained that although FiTI draws inspiration from EITI, its design is quite different, and this is highlighted in the fact that FiTI is going beyond financial reporting.
 - Nevertheless, it was noted that in some EITI countries, such as the DRC, EITI has incorporated the small-scale mining sector. It was suggested that the FiTI Secretariat could find out more on this and consider if there are any lessons for FiTI.
- ➡ **Follow-up: FiTI Secretariat to provide some brief notes on the experience of EITI in engaging the small-scale sector.**
- An early point raised in the discussion considered the overall objective of the FiTI as it applies to the small-scale sector. This should inter alia be in line with the goals and principles of the Voluntary Guidelines for Small-scale Fisheries. It was recognized that the motivation for increasing transparency in the large-scale sector is quite different to the small-scale sector. Furthermore, there were some differing views about the overall objective of the FiTI as it is applied to the small-scale fisheries (e.g. because the reasons behind the lack of transparency for small-scale fisheries are different from the reasons which explain the lack of transparency for large-scale fisheries). For example, can the FiTI be an initiative that promotes the rights of small-scale fisheries and protects them from negative or harmful competition from the large-scale sector? A view on this, referring back to the outcome of the first Advisory Group meeting, was that the FiTI should not be considered an advoca-

cy campaign, but rather that its strength lies in raising the level of public disclosure of information. Another view on the objectives of the FiTI is that the envisaged National Multi-Stakeholder Groups will allow for greater civil society participation and create a platform for small-scale fisheries representatives to ensure that their interests are appropriately reflected in the FiTI National Reports. These reports in turn are expected to result in improved decision making.

- **Follow-up: Clarify the objective and intended impacts of FiTI for the small-scale sector. André Standing to work on the draft document to this effect.**

ON THE TRANSPARENCY ELEMENTS

The discussion moved towards considering the list of reporting elements for implementing countries. The discussion was based on a review of the table provided in the background document. The following comments were made in the discussion:

- As a general point, it was suggested that the focus of the table was too narrow, and that it fails to include the post-harvest processing sector. A question was put to the group whether FiTI would be improved if it was extended to the post-harvesting sector, and not focus solely on fishing? The reason for doing this on the small-scale fisheries sector is important, given that the value added from the small-scale sector can be substantially beyond the catching of fish, and this is particularly important for women who make up the vast majority of the workforce in many countries in the post-harvest sector (processing, trade etc.). There was no firm agreement on this, although it was noted that including the post-harvest sector could add considerably to the complexity of FiTI reporting. It was not intended, however, to make the compilation of SSF post-harvest data a mandatory requirement¹.
- **Follow-up: The group needs to make a final recommendation on this, and if there is agreement to include the post-processing sector, draft reporting elements should be developed and discussed. The group may also consider including the post-harvest sector as an example of progressive improvements. See footnote 1 as well.**
- On the **number of small-scale fishers and fishing vessels (1.2.)**, it was recognized that for many countries available information on this may be limited or dated. Developing countries may undertake quantitative frame surveys on this periodically, and the best available data may be up to a decade (or more) out of date. However, it was agreed that this should not preclude countries from being able to submit satisfactory FiTI reports, as long as the

¹ *Comment by Rolf Willmann:* It should be noted in this context, that the employment and income benefits generated in the post-harvest sector of the large-scale sector are also relevant when comparing the relative costs and benefits of, for example, requiring foreign long distance fleets to land in the coastal state's port a part or the entire catch taken under the access arrangement).

National Multi-Stakeholder Groups approve of what is reported (see below under further considerations).

- On the **information about tenure arrangements (1.3.)**, it was agreed that this aspect should be relatively straightforward to report on. It was noted that the guidelines and list of information under this category should be expanded, and include more details on conditions/regulations controlling tenure arrangements. They should for instance include information on the country's legislation regarding restrictions to certain types of fishing operations within its EEZ (e.g. exclusive zone for small-scale fishing, restriction on access to trawlers up to x miles from the coast, etc.). In relation to co-management, some further thoughts need to be given on how to report on informal co-management schemes.

Related to the discussion on the tenure arrangements, it was suggested that the FiTI reporting could include information on **reported infractions by large-scale vessels, particularly into the waters reserved for exclusive use by small-scale fishers**. The point here is that if countries simply report on de jure tenure arrangements, this may be misleading if these tenure arrangements are not respected in reality. An alternative view was that the FiTI is unlikely to be able to capture reliable data on these types of illegal activities. Therefore reporting could focus on arrests or fines imposed on large-scale vessels. There was however no firm agreement on whether this should be included in the reporting requirements (e.g. because many encroachments/infractions into the SSF exclusive zone often neither result in arrests nor in fines), so it needs to be flagged for further discussion.

- ➡ **Follow-up: André Standing to include this point in a re-drafted background document and for this to be a topic to be further discussed by email/telephone among the task force members.**

- On **payments (2.1.)**, a criticism was raised that this data may be misleading or limited. A risk is that publishing data on payments made by the small-scale sector will provide a narrow interpretation about the value of small-scale fishers, which might be contrasted to the much higher levels of payments provided by the large-scale sector. Thus, there was a recommendation that the FiTI should require reporting that would expand our understanding of the valuable contribution of small-scale fisheries, and not report on payments in isolation (i.e. not covering entire contribution of SSF to economy might put SSF into 'political' disadvantage). There was no firm agreement on this matter, although it was explained that the intention in the draft table was not to conflate payments with value. Moreover, it was suggested that increasing transparency on the payments received by the government from small-scale fisheries (e.g. for fishing licenses, use of fishing harbor, through taxes) may be useful for improving fisheries management, as well as accountability by governments to the small-scale fisheries. Nevertheless, an unresolved issue here is whether reporting on payments in isolation is potentially detrimental, and whether this information should be joined by other information.

- ➡ **Follow-up: While the issue of including payments does not seem to be contested, the**

group should provide a final recommendation on this. Moreover, the group needs to consider how additional information could be captured in the FiTI National reports that might provide a more comprehensive view of the value of the small-scale sector.²

- On the **catch data (3.1.)**, it was described that countries should have more detailed information on this in comparison to data on the number of fishers. However, it is likely that data may still be unreliable. Nevertheless, the same approach to validating data should be followed (see below on further considerations).
 - A further point was raised here related to the FiTI reporting on the catches made by the large-scale sector. It was suggested that data on the quantity of catches could be limited if this was not joined by data on the value of the catches. It was however noted that this might be complex given the changing values of fish through the supply chain. However, this recommendation should be considered in finalizing the draft reporting elements for the large-scale sector, and will be taken forward by the task force group dealing with this.
- **Follow-up: André Standing to include this point to the task force on the large-scale sector, and for the FiTI Secretariat to report back to the task force on the small-scale sector on the outcomes of this discussion.**

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The definition and language used for the FiTI – and whether small-scale is preferable to artisanal or not – was not discussed, nor was the issue of how small-scale fisheries can be included in the verification of data reporting. These issues will be flagged for follow up discussions.³
- What was discussed was the issue of how the FiTI will deal with situations where countries are incapable of providing up-to-date or reliable information on small-scale fisheries. Discussions on this confirmed the suggestion contained in the background document, that

² *Note from André:* This discussion needs to consider the same point for the large-scale sector – we are not trying to capture information about the value provided by large-scale fisheries to the economy/food security either. The outcome of the discussion on the small-scale sector therefore has implications for the design of the reporting elements for the large-scale sector. *Comment by Rolf:* It is essential to avoid a situation to arise where a reader of a FiTI national report is misled about the relative contributions of LSF and SSF to national well-being, in particular in situations where a part of a coastal country's marine fishery resources are 'sold' to foreign fishing interests and possibly so at the cost of reduced fishing and post-harvest opportunities for domestic fisheries and by increasing the risk of resources overexploitation.

³ This aspect was also discussed during the negotiations of the VGSSF. The term 'artisanal' is used once in the VGSSF, in the Preface where it reads as follows: 'Small-scale and artisanal fisheries, encompassing all activities along the value chain – pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest – undertaken by men and women, play an important role in food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, equitable development and sustainable resource-utilization.' The Preface is too among the negotiated and agreed text.

countries should not be considered non-compliant with the FiTI if:

- A. the FiTI National Reports contain the best available information, and
- B. the National Multi-Stakeholder Group has agreed that what is reported through the FiTI represents the best available information.

This means that adequate flexibility and space would be provided in the reporting on SSF (i.e. *reporting opportunities*). Moreover, the FiTI National Reports on small-scale fisheries should be encouraged to indicate where data on small-scale fisheries may be absent or of low accuracy and in need for further research. This somewhat flexible approach for reporting for the FiTI is not applicable to the large-scale sector, where full and complete reporting on the transparency elements will be mandatory.

- To cover country differences, the principle of **progressive improvement** (one of the suggested Principles for the FiTI) was discussed as being valuable – especially to account for differences in data availability for small-scale fisheries.
- With respect to the current expectations that the FiTI Country Reports will be updated on an annual basis – it was agreed that in case of lack of current data it could be acceptable that the National Multi-Stakeholder Group agrees on estimates based on older statistics (e.g. number of small-scale vessels has increased by X percent in the course of last year).

NEXT STEPS

- There was insufficient time to work through all issues raised in this background document. It was agreed that members of the task force should continue to discuss unresolved issues on an ad hoc basis through emails based on
 - Minutes of the call, and
 - Changes to the background document based on the call

Next Call:

- A further group call before the holiday season will be arranged and the FiTI Secretariat will follow up on suggested dates for this.