INFOPÊCHE
Newsletter

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Illustration INFOPECHE

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Fish cargo landing by fishermen at the Locodjro fish landing site (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)

MACPPA

African Market for Marketing Fishery and Aquaculture Products

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Trade with one click

on MACPPA platform

Illustration : NYOPECHE

Fish seller at Abobodoume Market (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)

Summary


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Presentation of the MACPPA digital plateform by the INFOPÊCHE Director

Editorial

INFOPÊCHE, between strong achievements and challenges to address

For several years, INFOPÊCHE has been established as a key player in analyzing, disseminating, and promoting information related to fishery sector throughout Africa. Considering that fishery and aquaculture industries are undergoing profound changes, including climate change, though pressure on fishery resources, the rise of processing, and new regulatory requirements, it is essential to glance a look at INFOPÊCHE's completions.

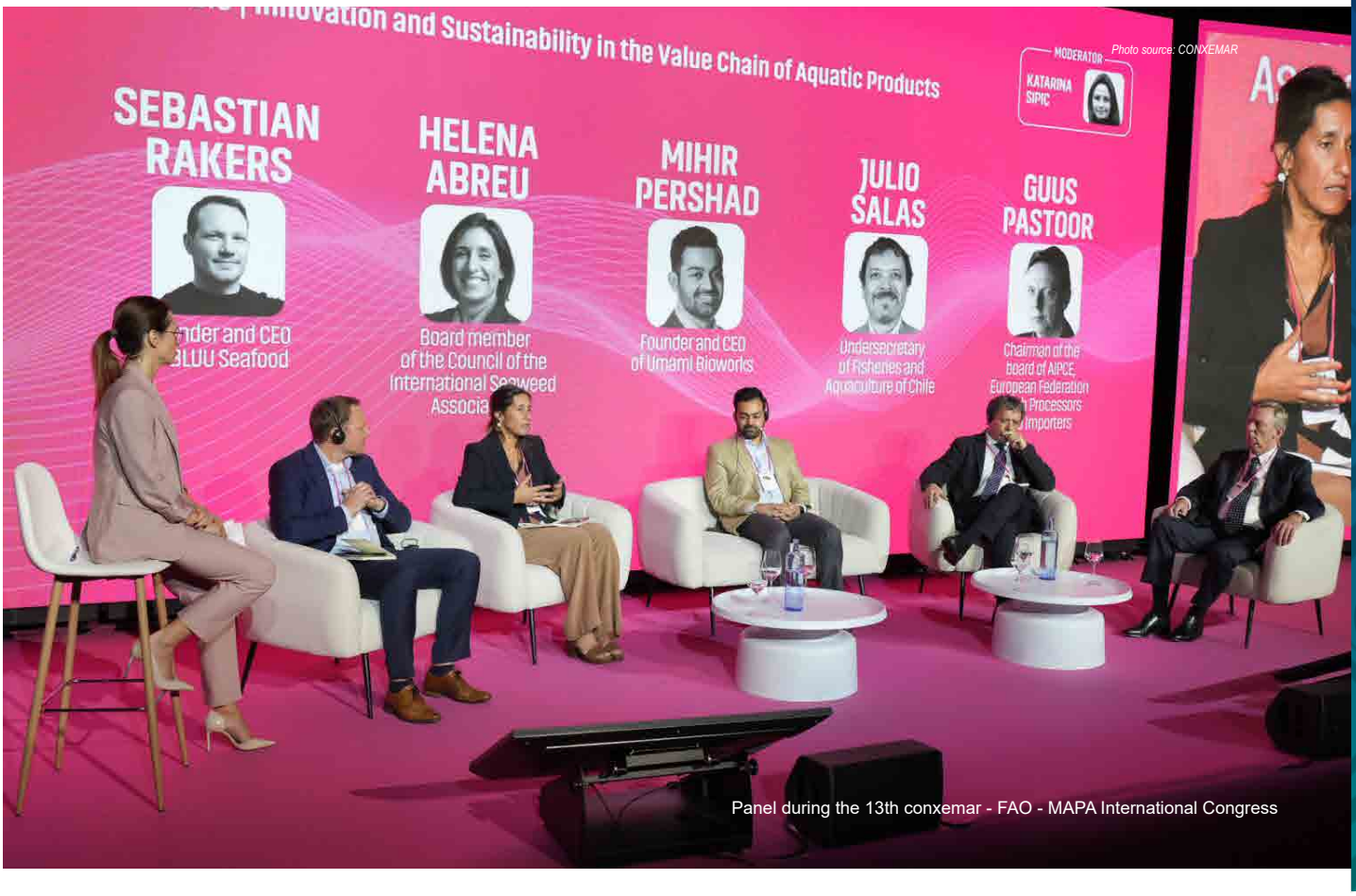
A strategic role in regional integration:

INFOPÊCHE has been playing an important role in harmonizing fisheries policies. Through its participation in seminars, workshops, and publications, it has been promoting ongoing dialogue between government agencies, private operators, and regional organizations. In this sense, the Intergovernmental organization has served as a neutral platform where national analyses, ambitions, and constraints are compared and contrasted for the benefit of a more collective vision.

Considering its rich and varied experience in the field of modernization and development of fisheries and aquaculture, INFOPECHE's prospects would be very promising if member states regularly paid their dues and integrated INFOPECHE more fully into their national fisheries and aquaculture development programs. In an era where digital technology is an important tool in the management of fisheries data, INFOPÊCHE must make e-commerce a real lever for transformation in the fisheries sector.

For the year 2025, a feasibility study for the implementation of a project on a digital platform for the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products in Africa has been carried out.

(INFOPÊCHE)



Panel during the 13th conxemar - FAO - MAPA International Congress

Latest news

13th conxemar - FAO - MAPA International Congress

INFOPÊCHE participates in the 13th Conxemar – FAO – MAPA International Congress: a renewed commitment to food security and sustainable fishing.

From October 6 to 8, 2025, the city of Vigo, Spain, hosted the 13th edition of the Conxemar– FAO – MAPA International Congress, a global event dedicated to the challenges of sustainable aquatic food production. This high-level event brought together international experts, institutional leaders, and executives from the fisheries and aquaculture sector to discuss the central theme: “Aquatic Food = Food Security.”

The opening ceremony featured a speech by Manuel Barange, Assistant Director-General of the FAO and Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division. He traced the evolution of the sector since the adoption of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, highlighting in particular the growing role of aquaculture as an engine of growth and a stable source of protein for the world's populations. He then gave the floor to Alberto Prieto, General Coordinator of the Fish Nation Foundation, who took stock of the 30 years since the adoption of the Code, while highlighting new global challenges related to climate change, unequal access to fishery resources, and sustainable ocean governance.

Illustration INFOPÊCHE

Family picture of the 13th conxemar - FAO - MAPA International Congress

During the Congress, CONXEMAR, the Spanish association of wholesalers, importers, exporters, and processors of fishery and aquaculture products, as well as the FIN network (Forum of Intergovernmental Organizations for the Dissemination of Commercial Information on Fishery Products), composed of INFOFISH, INFOPÊCHE, INFOPESCA, INFOSAMAK, INFOYU, EUROFISH, and GLOBEFISH, analyzed the strategic levers that need to be strengthened in order to promote sustainable practices and encourage innovation in the fish processing industry.

The Intergovernmental Organization INFOPÊCHE, represented by its Director, Mr. AKAFFOU ATSE CASIMIR ERIC, actively participated in this 13th Congress. This participation is in line with INFOPÊCHE's mission: to support stakeholders in the African fisheries sector through information, market analysis, and the search for solutions adapted to local realities. Through its presence in Vigo, INFOPÊCHE reaffirmed its determination to remain a committed player in international discussions aimed at strengthening the sustainability, competitiveness, and resilience of fisheries in Africa.

(INFOPÊCHE)

INFOPÊCHE's participation in the meeting of FISHINFO network members

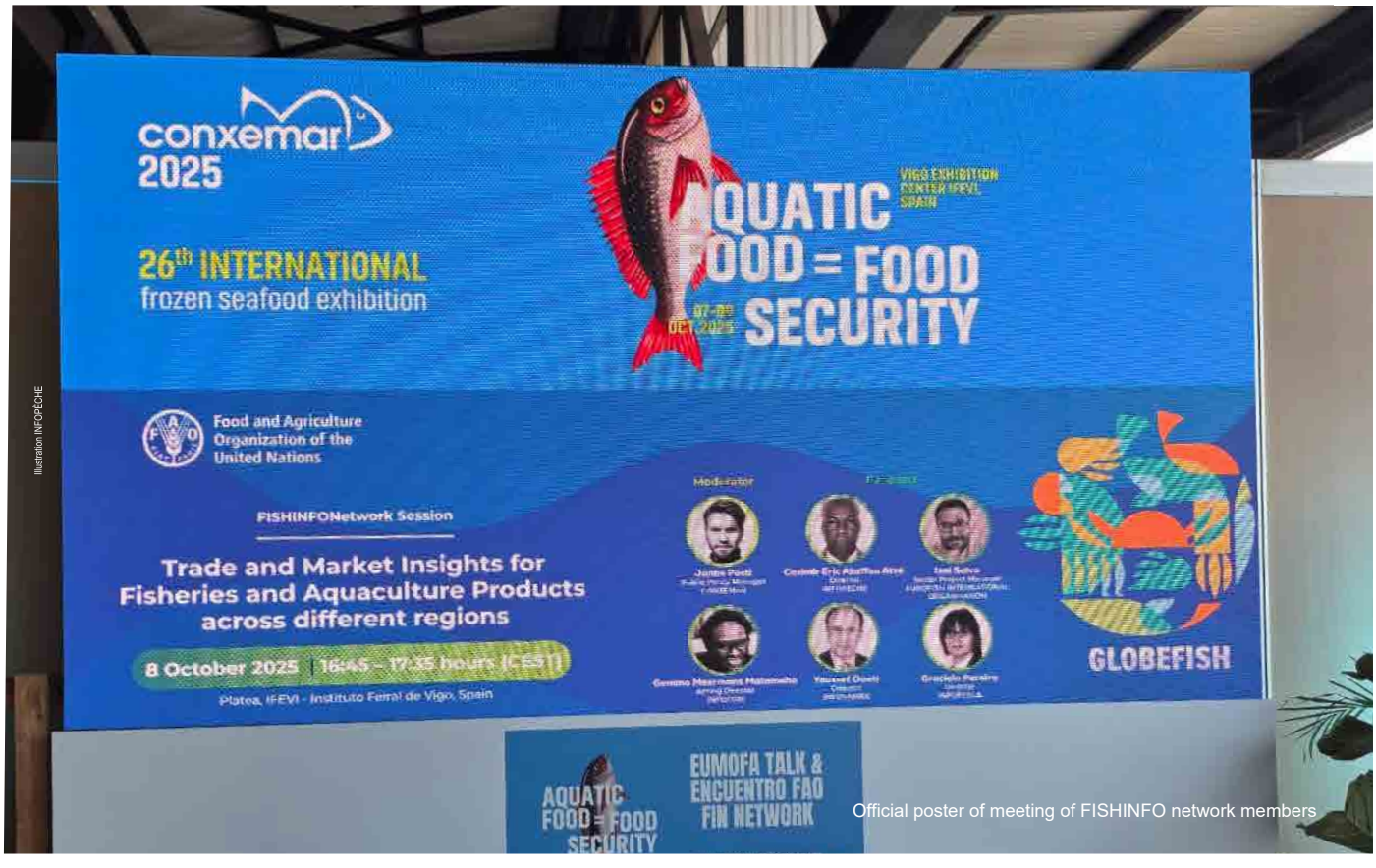


Illustration INFOPÊCHE

Official poster of meeting of FISHINFO network members

The current collaboration between the FAO's FISHINFO Network and CONXEMAR highlights the potential of cooperation to promote sustainable practices and encourage innovation in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. It strengthens CONXEMAR's role as a key supporter of global discussions and reinforces its alliance with the FAO's FISHINFO network, a group of independent regional intergovernmental organizations dedicated to information sharing and market transparency.

Here was the context that INFOPÊCHE, a member of the FISHINFO network, was invited as a panelist for the session entitled "Trade and market trends for fishery and aquaculture products," held on October 8th, 2025, at the CONXEMAR International Exhibition in Vigo, Spain.

In fact, INFOPÊCHE's presentation focused on the following areas of reflection:

- What major changes in consumer demand or trade flows have you observed in your region ?
- What policies or regulatory changes are likely to shape market dynamics in the coming years ?
- How do international standards and market requirements influence access to high value-added markets ?

(INFOPÊCHE)

Exhibition

Conxemar sets new records and reaffirms its position as a global leader in frozen seafood products

Family picture in the exhibition area of the 13th conxemar - FAO - MAPA International Congress

The International Frozen Seafood Trade Show Conxemar has closed the doors of its 26th edition with an exceptional outcome, setting a new attendance record. The event welcomed 30,405 visitors, representing an increase of more than 12% compared to the previous edition, and surpassed the threshold of 800 exhibitors for the first time, with 812 companies in attendance versus 766 in 2024, representing 46 countries.

Once again occupying the entire Vigo Exhibition Centre (IFEVI), Conxemar further strengthens its position among the world's leading trade fairs and establishes itself as a must-attend event for companies, buyers, and distributors specializing in frozen products and aquatic proteins.

"Growth is widespread and consistent across all indicators: visitors, exhibitors, exhibition space, parallel activities, and media coverage," emphasized Eloy García, President of Conxemar, adding that "the outcome of this edition could not be more positive."

While welcoming these results, he also called on public authorities to support this momentum: "We have now reached a physical limit. The lack of space, access, and parking is becoming a real challenge in the face of the sector's continued growth," he warned.

(INFOPÊCHE)

A fast-growing international trade fair

Over the course of three days, Conxemar brought together the leading global players in frozen fish, aquaculture, processing, and distribution, confirming its role as a strategic platform for commercial and institutional exchanges.

Alongside its regular international delegations, the 2025 edition was marked by the participation of new exhibiting countries and the organization of reverse trade missions, in cooperation with ICEX, the Chambers of Commerce, and IGAPE, further strengthening the show's international dimension.

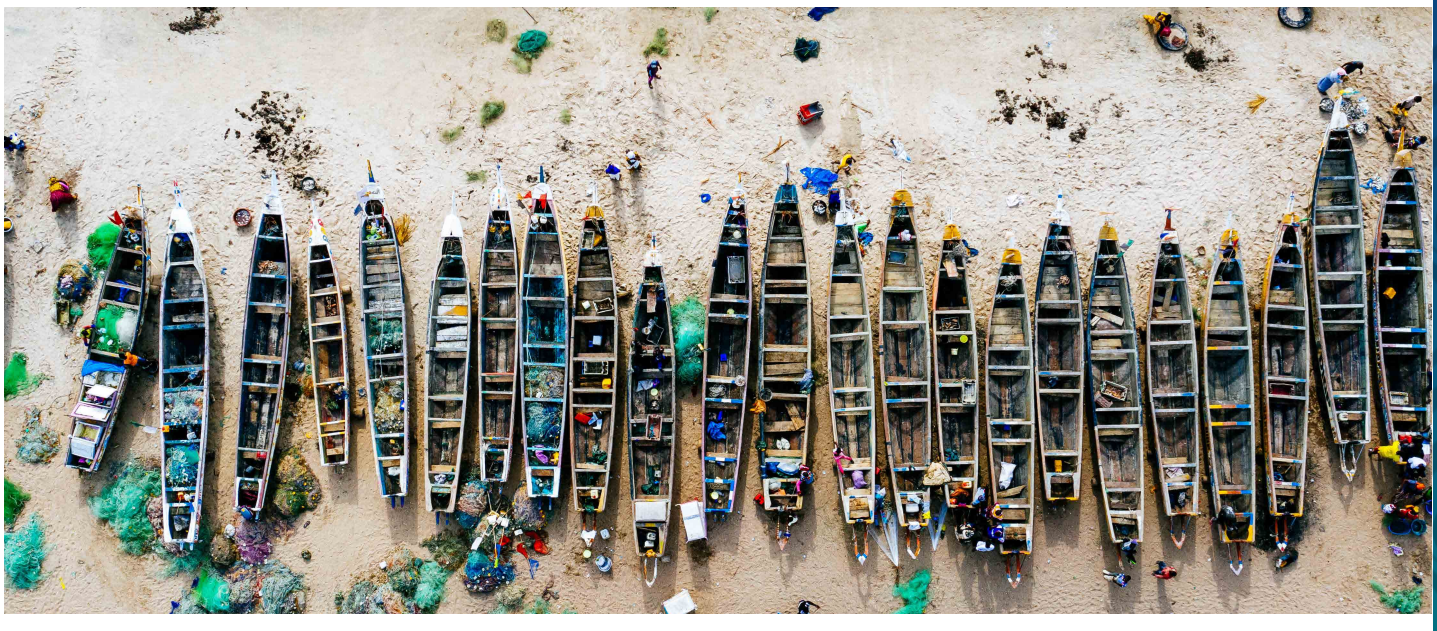
Illustration INFOPÊCHE

Exhibition area of the 13th conxemar - FAO - MAPA International Congress

The event also stood out for an intensification of presentations, business meetings, and parallel activities, with the participation of leading institutions such as the FAO, the European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products (EUMOFA), as well as several international agencies.

Finally, the last day was marked by a festive moment with a concert by the local band Malfinde, winner of the Conxemar Fest Fish & Hits competition an initiative launched last year to support and promote emerging talent on the Galician music scene.

(INFOPÊCHE)



Latest news

Eighth General Assembly of APRIFAAS

INFOPÊCHE Participates in the eighth general assembly of the African Platform for Regional Institutions for Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Systems (APRIFAAS)

This general assembly, themed "The instruments of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to facilitate interregional and sub-regional trade of aquatic products: Opportunities for strengthening regional cooperation and coordination," washeldfromNovember11 to 13, 2025, in Kampala, Uganda.

The main objectives of this eighth APRIFAAS General Assembly are to analyze the progress of the implementation of relevant global and continental instruments, in particular the African Continental Free Trade Area, and how the instrument can be leveraged to increase trade in fish and fishery products at the regional and continental levels.

As a result, the Intergovernmental Organization for Marketing Information and Cooperation services for Fishery Products in Africa (INFOPÊCHE) took part in this meeting to present its digital platform for the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products in Africa, known as MACPPA.

MACPPA specializes in the promotion and marketing of fishery products. Its objectives are based on the following areas:

- Centralizing information on the availability of fishery products.
- Facilitating contact between sellers and buyers.
- Promote and enhance the value of African fishery products.
- Integrate artificial intelligence tools for the proactive platform.
- Establish a sustainable economic model.

Participants appreciated the robustness of this platform and encouraged INFOPËCHE to deploy it quickly for the benefit of stakeholders in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa.

(INFOPÊCHE)

Focus

Competitiveness and access to regional and international markets

Awfishnet promotes innovation and best practices in seafood processing.

The African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (Awfishnet) prioritizes competitiveness and expanding access to fishery products in national, regional, and continental markets. To achieve this, the network organized a symposium coupled with a trade fair for fishery products from March 20 to 22, 2025, at the N'diambour Hotel in Dakar, at a side event its general assembly.

This activity provides an opportunity to share experiences, promote innovations and good processing practices, and stimulate creativity among women processors. Participants from member countries demonstrated their talent and know-how, proving their commitment to reducing post-harvest losses and to the sustainable management of fishery resources.

Original approaches to transformation, to be widely shared.

Ms. Fihil Agoï, Chairwoman of Awfishnet in Chad, shared her expertise in manufacturing organic fertilizer and fish feed from fish waste. "We decided to add value to our fish processing business. We make organic fertilizer from fish waste. We produce fish feed, which can also be used for livestock. We sell these products throughout Chad, in addition to the fish we smoke," she explained, presenting samples of these products.

Ms. Amina Farah Arshe, chairwoman of Awfishnet in Somaliland (an autonomous region in northern Somalia, which separated and declared its independence from Somalia in 1991), owns a tuna processing plant that manufactures tuna and dogfish oil. By 2012, she was already employing 40 fishermen aboard 11 vessels from Berbera, Somaliland's main port.

The chairwoman of Awfishnet in Côte d'Ivoire, Makamba Mariana Camara, presented her products called “saveur bio de la mère et épices” (mother's organic flavor and spices), a dietary supplement that helps digestion, stimulates appetite, and prevents stress. They were congratulated by the Chief of Staff, Dr. Mamadou Goundiaby, who opened the proceedings on behalf of the Senegalese Minister of Fisheries, Maritime Infrastructure, and Ports on Thursday, March 20, 2025. “This symposium is a success for Mother Africa (Editor's note/Awfishnet),” he said. The first symposium and trade fair for women fish processors and traders in Africa took place in November 2019 in Kampala, Uganda.

(Marcelle AKA)

Objective and challenges

In the process of institutionalizing this annual continental symposium, Awfishnet has set some challenging goals:
Create a safe and healthy working environment for women in the fisheries sector.

- Ensure the conservation, sustainability, and accessibility of fish stocks.
- Promote blue justice and strengthen women's participation in the blue economy.
- Improve the viability and competitiveness of women-owned businesses.
- Increase women's commitment in policy and regulatory processes.
- Strengthen organizational development and resource mobilization.

Promote intra-African trade in fish and fishery products by leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

(Marcelle AKA)

Lovin Kobusingye, the new Chairwoman of Awfishnet Africa, and her team in action

Since Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at the N'diambour Residence Hotel in Dakar, Senegal, Lovin Kobusingye of Uganda has been the new president of the African Women Fishers and Fish Traders Network (Awfishnet), following the 2nd General Assembly, which began on Monday, March 17. She replaces Cameroon's Beyene Atéba, born Baliaba, the first Chairwoman of this organization, which brings together women involved in the fisheries value chain and was created in 2018. Diaba Diop of Senegal is the first vice chairwoman . The position of Secretary General went to Julia Sylvie Mounstsoueké from Congo, and Shelika Oluwafunmilola from Nigeria was appointed Treasurer. This new board is open to young people and people with reduced mobility. These two positions went to Marwa Ahmed from Egypt and Massouada Rachid from Morocco, respectively. It should be noted that the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cameroon, Zambia, Tanzania, Algeria, and Madagascar were not allowed to stand for election because they had served two terms in the previous board.

This election, supervised by Helen Guebama, representing the Director of the Inter-African Bureau for Animal and Fisheries Resources (UA-BIRA), and Senior Fisheries Officer Delvis Fortes (UA-BIRA), marks a new beginning for this pan-African organization.

(Marcelle AKA)

Consolidating national networks for a strong Awfishnet

The 2nd General Assembly of the African Women Fishers and Fish Traders Network (Awfishnet), held in Dakar, Senegal, from Monday, March 17, 2025, to Wednesday, March 19, 2025, revealed the need to consolidate Awfishnet Africa by strengthening its national networks with mass membership. However, national chapters in some countries, although established, are not regularly constituted. In other countries, they have not yet been established.

Bernice Mclean of Nepad and socio-economist Gertrude Alukunda, principal researcher on national fishery resources (NAFIRI) in Uganda, presenting the Awfishnet Africa strategic plan on Wednesday, March 19, 2023, recommended that in order to strengthen the leadership and influence of this institution, the shortcomings related to its organization and coordination should be identified and addressed.

They called on informal Awfishnet national networks to comply with the rules for their legal existence. “Register your organization and obtain a certificate of registration, constitution, and/or any other document required to operate as a legal entity in your country,” she urged.

Next, they must demonstrate their ability to design and implement programs, initiate training to build women's capacity in the fisheries value chain, and, above all, produce activity reports, which are indicators of Awfishnet's governance and outreach. In addition, they must adopt appropriate policies and strategic plans and innovative mechanisms to reassure donors and partners.

It is important not to lose sight of the integration of young people and people with disabilities, which is in line with the objectives of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063.

(Marcelle AKA)

Illustration INFOPÊCHE

Headline

Fish processing: from local expertise to digital markets

(Case of Côte d'Ivoire)

While industry stakeholders are deeply involved in the day-to-day work of fishing and preservation, as well as processing, digital technology is becoming a powerful lever for selling, communicating, and promoting their products more effectively.

Fish processor from the Locodjro fish landing site (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)


Illustration INFOPÊCHE

Fish processor from the Locodjro fish landing site (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)

Fishery products processing: an often invisible pillar of the Ivorian economy

In Côte d'Ivoire, fishing is much more than just catching fish: it is an essential industry for food security, job opportunity, and the economic stability of many communities. However, behind this vital sector, the processing of fishery products remains informal. This activity is often invisible and undervalued, yet it is absolutely central to increasing the shelf life of catches and generating income for thousands of households.

An industry dominated by diverse stakeholders but often fragile

Processing fishery products in Côte d'Ivoire involves several categories of actors:

Artisanal processors
mostly women, who often work on a small scale level to produce smoked or dried fish after capture.

Les coopératives locales
They represent a significant proportion of those active in this link of the chain. Local cooperatives, which help to structure production, pool efforts, and access better technologies or financing. For example, the Union of Fish Processing Cooperatives (USCOFEP-CI) which gether dozens of cooperatives and thousands of women across the country.

The Small Medium Enterprises (SME)
and more structured semi-industrial units, which can produce on a larger scale and meet the demands of markets that are more exacting in terms of quality and hygiene.

These actors operate in a variety of contexts, including lagoon areas such as Abidjan, fishing centers such as Sassandra and San Pedro, and urban markets where demand for processed products remains strong.

(INFOPÊCHE)

Smoked fish from the Locodjro fish landing site (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)

Fish processing products in Côte d'Ivoire : between food traditions and preservations issues

In Côte d'Ivoire, processing of fishery products is essential to meet local dietary habits and ensure the preservation of fish in a tropical environment. Several forms of processing coexist and structure consumption throughout the country.

Smoked fish : a dominant and essential technique

Smoked fish remains by far, the most common form of fish processing in Côte d'Ivoire. Practiced mainly using traditional methods, smoking significantly extends the shelf life of fish while giving it a taste that is appreciated by consumers. This technique is an ideal solution for local conditions, particularly in areas where access to electricity and cold storage remains limited. According to the FAO, smoking is therefore an essential link in reducing post-harvest losses and ensuring the availability of fish on the markets.

Smoked fish : a practical and widely appreciated solution

Dried fish, often processed using traditional methods, is particularly popular in certain regions of the country. Its light weight and ease of transport make it ideal for trade between coastal areas and inland regions. This form of preservation allows households to have fish available over a long period of time, while easily integrating into local culinary practices.

Salted fish : enhance conservation through combined techniques

Salting fish, sometimes combined with drying, is another processing method used to improve the preservation of fishery products.

Salting limits the growth of microorganisms and extends the shelf life of fish, which is particularly important in areas far from landing sites. Although less widespread than smoking, this technique remains essential in certain communities.

A key role in food security

All of these processed products play a fundamental role in the diet of African populations in general and Ivorians in particular. These products ensure a continuous supply of animal protein intake, even in areas far from the coast and the fishing grounds. In this sense, fish processing contributes directly to food security while supporting the livelihoods of thousands of households, particularly those involved in processing.

(INFOPÊCHE)

Photo Source: AIP

Improvement of the smoking technique for fishery products : Introduction of the improved FTT-Thiaroye oven

A response to the need to improve small-scale fish drying and smoking operations, the FTT Thiaroye (FAO Thiaroye processing technique) ensures that Thiaroye fish smoking and drying operations comply with food safety requirements and can also be carried out regardless of weather conditions.

Not only does the FFT Thiaroye enables to market higher quality products, but it also leads to a reduction in coal use, facilitates the use of agricultural by-products, and increases employment for women working in the fishing industry. This file details how to build and to assemble an FTT unit, which includes a charcoal stove, a grease plate, a smoke generator, and an air distributor.

It also explains the advantages and how the FTT-Thiaroye technique impacts fuel use. The FTT-Thiaroye is a technique developed through collaborative efforts between the FAO and the CNFTPA training institute in Senegal. Its development responds to the need to improve small-scale fish drying and smoking operations. The key to its adoption lies in its inherent advantages.

Firstly, the FTT permits to market higher quality and safer products (notably thanks to the absence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons/PAHs), while providing higher yields and marginal post-harvest losses.

Secondly, it reduces the wood or coal/fish ratio, and its structure facilitates the use of agricultural by-products (corn or millet cobs, coconut shells or husks, etc.) and cooking gas as fuels. This reduces the environmental impact and operating costs.

Finally, the FTT reduces the drudgery of work for female fishing operators by reducing the exposure of processors to smoke and heat. The FTT was first tested and validated in Senegal. Fishing operators in other African countries have also tried out the Thiaroye system, including Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, and recently Ghana.

The FTT-Thiaroye is a system built on the achievements of existing improved oven models that are already widely adopted in Africa, such as the Chorkor, Banda, and Altona. These stoves become FTTs when a few specific components are added. These components are the burner, the grease collection plate, the indirect smoke generator system, and the air distributor.

(INFOPÊCHE)

Photo source: AIP

Processing fishery products: issues and challenges between creating added value and structural constraints

Local processing now plays a strategic role in Côte d'Ivoire's economic development. Whether it involves fishery products, foodstuffs, or products derived from local resources, processing increases added value, creates jobs opportunities, strengthens local supply, and reduces dependence on imports. Despite this significant potential, the processing sector continues to face numerous structural challenges that limit its real economic impact.

One of the main challenges concerns post-harvest losses. The lack of processing facilities close to landing areas, inadequate equipment, and the absence of efficient cold chains lead to rapid deterioration of products even before they are processed.
These losses reduce the quantity of raw materials and directly affect the profitability of existing processing facilities.

Preservation, handling, and storage are another major challenge. In Côte d'Ivoire, modern storage infrastructure remains limited, particularly for processed products requiring specific temperature and hygiene conditions. This situation compromises the final quality of products, limits their shelf life, and complicates their large-scale distribution, both on the national and regional markets.

Many processing plants, often artisanal or semi-industrial, struggle to comply with the sanitary standards required by lucrative markets. The lack of traceability (certification, standardized packaging, labeling) greatly reduces access to modern distribution channels, supermarkets, and institutional markets. Yet these channels represent the most stable and lucrative outlets.

Limited access to lucrative markets thus remains one of the main obstacles to the sector's development. Even when products are processed locally, their marketing remains dominated by informal, poorly structured, and unstable channels. The lack of networking platforms, sustainable commercial contracts, and adequate logistics prevents processors from securing their sales and increasing their incomes.

This situation reinforces dependence on intermediaries, who play a key role in the distribution of processed products. While these actors facilitate market access, their dominant position often limits processors' margins and reduces their investment capacity. Without strong collective organization or direct access to end buyers, processing units capture an insufficient share of the value created.

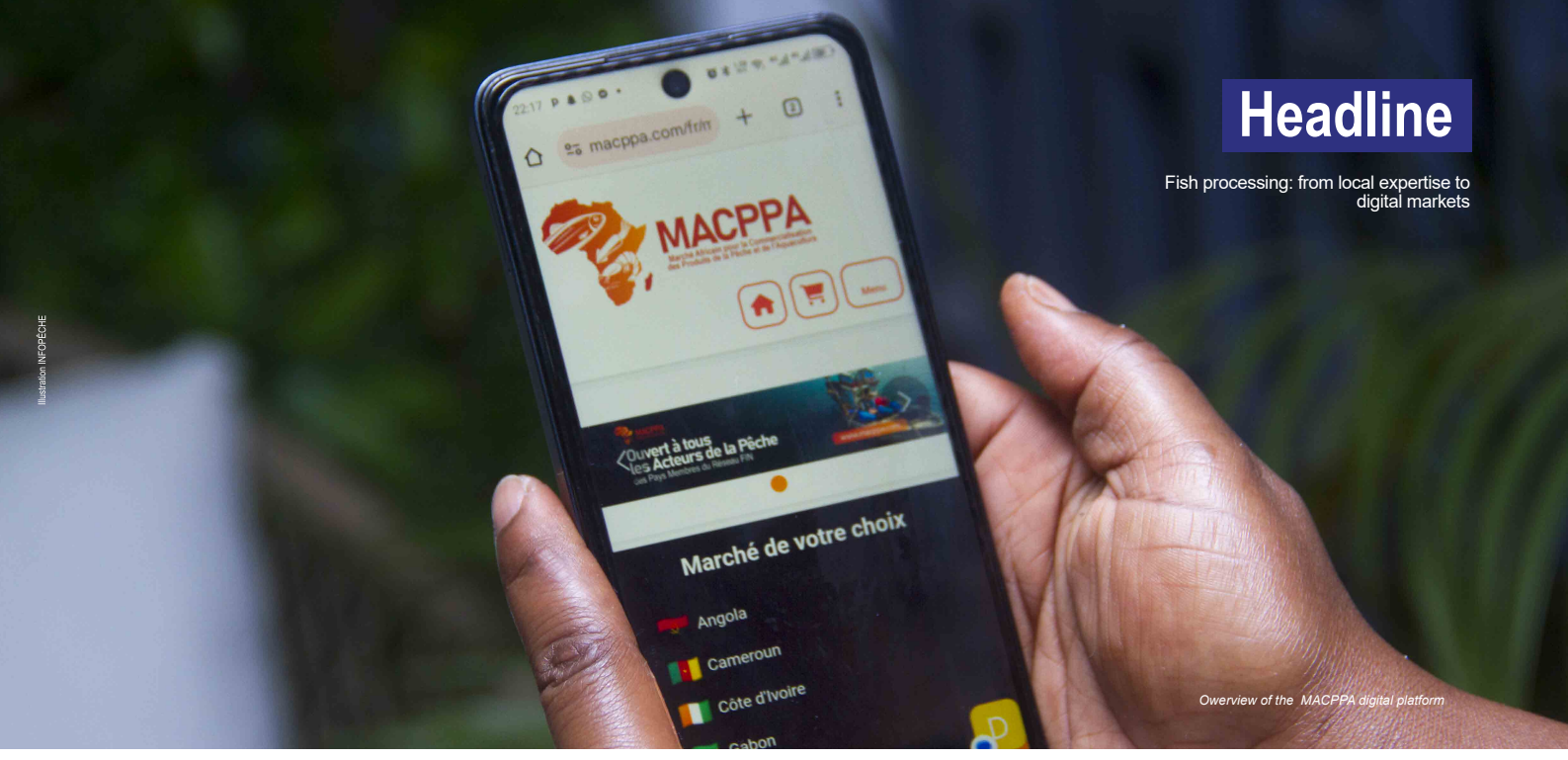


Illustration INFOPÊCHE

Owerview of the MACPPA digital platform

MACPPA: a digital solution to facilitate the marketing of processed fishery and aquaculture products

Marketing remains one of the main challenges for those involved in the processing of fishery and aquaculture products in Côte d'Ivoire and more broadly in Africa. Despite efforts to improve local processing, many processors still encounter difficulties in selling their products, accessing lucrative markets, and establishing direct contact with reliable buyers.
Regarding to this situation, INFOPÊCHE offers an innovative solution tailored to the realities of the sector: the African Market for Marketing Fishery and Aquaculture Products (MACPPA).

MACPPA is a simple and easy-to-use digital platform designed to facilitate direct contact between sellers and buyers of fishery and aquaculture products, particularly processed products. It fully meets one of INFOPÊCHE's fundamental missions: to improve market access and enhance the visibility of industry players through digital tools.

In clearly speaking, the platform allows the processors to showcase their products, indicate available quantities, and connect directly with buyers, without relying exclusively on traditional in-between traders.

This direct connection helps to streamline trade, reduce sales lead times, and improve the value of processed products.

In Côte d'Ivoire, MACPPA is already operational and being used by stakeholders in the field, particularly retailers at the Locodjro site and the Abobodoumé market in Abidjan.

These initial experiences demonstrate the practical value of the platform and its potential to further structure the marketing of processed products.

Beyond the Ivorian context, MACPPA stands out for its universal and regional nature. The platform is not limited to Côte d'Ivoire: it is functional and usable in all INFOPÊCHE member countries, offering processors opportunities to access larger markets at the regional and African levels..

For processors, MACPPA, therefore, represents a concrete solution for selling their products digitally. By leveraging this digital platform, they can gain visibility, secure their markets, and actively participate in the modernization of the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products in Africa.

(INFOPÊCHE)


Training session for fisheries stakeholders on the use of the MACPPA

Training

Ghana: Training of 95 focal points from the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development on the use of the MACPPA digital platform

On November 13, 2025, the Intergovernmental Organization for Markting Information and Cooperation Services for Fishery Products in Africa (INFOPÊCHE) organized an online training session on the use of the digital platform for the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products for focal points from the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Ghana.

The objective of this training was to present the various features and operating procedures of the platform to the focal points.
Specifically, the MACPPA platform facilitates connections between buyers and sellers and centralizes information on the availability of fishery products. Around 100 participants from the Fisheries Commission.

The focal points who have benefited from this training will serve as trainers for the implementation of the digital platform among the stakeholders of Ghana's fishing industry.

(INFOPÊCHE)

Expert point of view

The discovery of the yellow face sandlance

The Yellow face sandlance is a relatively small fish found in the sandy areas off Mozambique. It is characterized by an elongate and slender body with black spots tracing the edge of the dorsal fin, and bright yellow head.

This species was discovered on 16 October 2007 by P.C. Heemstra and E. Heemstra, during an expedition aboard the research vessel Dr. Fridtjof Nansen in the western Indian Ocean. While conducting a survey off the coast of Mozambique, they collected 18 specimens of an Ammodytoides species in a single trawl at a depth of 26–28 m during the early morning. These specimens included both ripe males and females, which explained their presence in the net. Typically, members of this family evade capture by staying close to the seabed, burrowing, or using their speed to escape. However, during spawning they tend to swim higher in the water column, making them more susceptible to trawl nets. On 19 October an additional specimen was collected at a depth of 62 m, further contributing to the understanding of this species.

Expert point of view

The discovery of the yellow face

Class: Osteichthyes.
Family: Ammodytidae.
Brief description: 48–49 dorsal-fin rays; opercle without small scales on upper surface; dorsal side dark purplish-grey, fading to pale silvery-blue ventrally; caudal fin with a broad blackish border.
Size: Up to 13 cm in length.
Described by: J.E. Randall and P.C. Heemstra (2008).
Etymology: *Ammodytoides*: Greek "ammos" = sand + "dytes" = diving; xanthops: Greek, "xanthos" = yellow + "ops" = face.

The yellow face sandlance displays a distinctive combination of features, such as a dorsal fin which has 48 or 49 rays, a lateral line marked by 106 to 112 scales, and an opercle that lacks small scales on its upper surface. When freshly caught, the species is visually striking: its dorsal side is dark purplish-grey, fading into a pale silvery-blue along the sides and ventral surface. The region between the eyes and most of the head is bright yellow, while the snout's front and the tip of the lower jaw are shaded dusky. A line of six or seven black spots traces the edge of the dorsal fin, but none are found on the other fins. The caudal fin is distinguished by a broad blackish border along its posterior edge.

This species is a member of the Ammodytidae family, commonly referred to as sandlances. Often called sand eels – despite not being true eels these intriguing small fish hold a vital role in marine ecosystems. Their streamlined bodies make them excellent burrowers in sandy seabeds, a skill they use to hide from predators and to rest. These small fish also form shimmering schools, which offer them safety in numbers and are a mesmerizing sight underwater. Without a swim bladder, they stick close to the seabed or burrow into the sand, and some even hibernate in deeper layers during colder months.

They feed on zooplankton and exhibit adaptations such as a protrusible jaw, a relatively short snout for precise binocular vision, reduced or absent teeth, and long gill rakers. Their streamlined elongated body, protective adipose eyelid, forked caudal fin, and low dorsal and anal fins which fit neatly into grooves, are specialized for swift swimming. Positioned near the centre of their head, their eyes provide a wide field of vision, allowing them to detect predators both above and below. If escape is necessary, they dive into the sand, aided by their pointed, projecting lower jaw and the ability to fold their fins into grooves.

The protrusible jaw of sandlances is a remarkable adaptation that enhances their feeding efficiency. This flexible jaw structure allows them to extend their mouth outward to capture prey such as plankton and small invertebrates with precision. The mechanism provides a rapid, efficient way to snatch food while minimizing energy expenditure, making it particularly advantageous in their dynamic sandy habitats.

Geographical distribution
Mozambique

FIN (Fish InfoNetwork)

INFOPÊCHE

Angola - Cameroon - Congo - Ivory Coast
Gabon - Gambia - Ghana - Guinea
Guinea-Bissau - Liberia - Morocco - Mauritania
Mozambique - Namibia - Nigeria - Senegal
Sierra Leone - Togo

INFOSAMAK

Algeria - Bahrain - Djibouti - Iraq - Libya
- Morocco - Mauritania - Palestine -
Sudan - Syria - Tunisia - Yemen

INFOPESCA

Argentina - Barbados - Belize - Brazil
Chile - Colombia - Costa Rica - Cuba - Dominica -
Ecuador - Grenada - Guyana - Mexico - Panama -
Paraguay - Peru - Dominican Republic
Uruguay - Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia - Suriname

INFOFISH

Bangladesh - Cambodia - Fiji - Iran
Malaysia - the Maldives - Pakistan - Papua New
Guinea - The Philippines - The Solomon Islands
Sri Lanka - Thailand

EUROFISH

Albania - Croatia - Denmark - Estonia
Hungary - Italy - Latvia - Lithuania
Norway - Poland - Romania - Spain
Turkey

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Pacific Tuna 2050: Resilience, Innovation, Equity and Sustainable Trade for a Prosperous Future

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The Pacific tuna story is, at its heart, a story about stewardship: of people, of resources, and of an ocean whose productivity sustains communities far beyond the Blue Pacific Continent. That ethos was unmistakable at the 9th Pacific Tuna Forum (PTF 2025), where senior officials, scientists, industry leaders, and civil society gathered to take stock of progress and chart a course to 2050. Framed by the theme “Pacific Tuna 2050: Resilience, Innovation, Equity and Sustainable Trade for a Prosperous Future,” the two-day programme in Nadi, Fiji, combined hard science with policy, market intelligence with social responsibility, and regional vision with practical investment pathways.

Hosted by the Government of Fiji, in partnership with Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority (PNG NFA) and INFOFISH; and co-organised with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Pacific Community (SPC), the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), and FAO GLOBEFISH, the Forum reaffirmed the Pacific’s leadership of a fishery that supplies the majority of the world’s tuna.

It also underscored a broader truth: tuna is not only an export commodity but a pillar of food security, livelihoods, culture, and trade across the region.

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Fish landing site of Tema, Ghana

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Ghana: Profile of fishery and aquaculture sector

Ghana, officially the Republic of Ghana, is a country in West Africa. It is bordered by Côte d'Ivoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. Its total area is 238,527 km².2 .The country has a coastline of nearly 550 km (Quaatey, 1997; Ali, 2004) and the continental shelf covers an area of approximately 24,300 km². The country's exclusive economic zone covers an area of 218,100 km² (Amador, et al, 2006).

Accra is the capital and largest city in the country. In 2005, the country's population was 21,029,000. The country is divided into 16 regions, which are further subdivided into 261 districts. These sixteen regions are: Ashanti, Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Bono, Bono-East, North-East, Savannah, Upper East, Upper West, Volta, Oti, Western, and West-North.
The coastal regions are: West, Central, Greater Accra, and Volta. The main ethnic groups along the coast are: Ahanta, Efutu, Ewe, Fante, Ga-adangbe, and Nzima (Marquette et al., 2002).

Agriculture is the dominant sector of the Ghanaian economy, employing about 60% of the working population. Agriculture, which is mainly artisanal, traditional, and rain-fed, contributes 45-50% of GDP and about 75% of Ghana's export earnings. The fisheries sub-sector accounts for 5% of the country's agricultural GDP.

With an annual consumption of about 25 kg per capita, fish is a preferred source of animal protein in Ghana.

It contributes 60% of the animal protein intake of Ghanaians. Approximately 75% of total national fish production is consumed locally. Ghana's fishing industry relies on marine and continental (freshwater) resources, coastal lagoons, and aquaculture. (Quaatey, 1997; NAFAG, 200

Structure of the fisheries sector

Marine fishery subsectors

The marine fisheries sector is generally divided into four sub-sectors: artisanal fisheries, semi-industrial fisheries, industrial fisheries, and tuna fisheries. Of these subsectors, artisanal fishing is the most important in terms of fish landed weight, accounting for approximately 70 to 80% of national marine fish production (Quaatey, 1997; Amador et al., 2006

Small scale fishery

Artisanal fishing is characterized by the use of several types of gear, including purse seines, beach seines, gillnets, drift nets, and hook and line. This gear is operated from dugout canoes. There are more than 11,200 canoes and more than 124,000 active fishermen operating from more than 300 landing sites spread across 550 km of coastline. Approximately 50% of these canoes are powered by outboard motors with a maximum power of 40 hp (Amador et al., 2006).

Different artisanal gear targets different resources: artisanal purse seines and beach seines mainly exploit small pelagic species. Purse seines are used to harvest adult sardinella and Spanish mackerel during upwelling periods, when these species move to coastal waters to spawn. Outside of upwelling periods, anchovies and juvenile sardinella in coastal waters are targeted by this gear. Beach seines are operated from the beach and target adult sardinella during upwelling periods, and juvenile anchovy and sardinella during rest periods. The artisanal sector accounts for around 90% of total small pelagic landings.

Longlines and beach seines are the main artisanal gear used to exploit demersal resources. Longline canoes operate in deep waters, up to about 80 meters, on hard bottoms. Some have ice storage facilities to preserve the fish and can therefore remain at sea for up to three days.

They target seabream (mainly Dentex gibbosus, Pagruscaeruleostictus, and Dentex canariensis), snappers (Lutjanusfulgens, L. goreensis), and groupers (Epinephelusaeneus).

Beach seine fishing targets adult and juvenile demersal fish, but mainly juveniles. Target species include burrito (Brachydeuterusauritus), red snapper (Lutjanusfulgens), gray snapper (Lethrinusatlanticus), mullet (Pseudupeneuss-prayensis and Mugilspp.), and ribbonfish (Trichiuruslepturus). Artisanal fishing accounts for about 50% of annual demersal fish landings.

Drift gillnets are used offshore to catch mainly large pelagicspeciessuch as sharks (Carcharhinusspp.), tuna (Thunnusalbacares, T. obesus), sailfish (Istiophorusalbicans) and swordfish (Xiphias gladius).

Artisanal gear is also used to fish for mollusks and crustaceans. Until 1983, beach seines were the main method used to fish for cuttlefish in Ghanaian waters, accounting for over 60% of annual landings. Today, industrial trawlers account for over 80% of annual landings.

Beach seines are used to catch mainly Parapeneopsis atlantica and Penaeuskerathurus shrimp (adults and juveniles) and juvenile Penaeus notialis shrimpduring their migration from estuaries to marine waters. Fixed lobster pots target rock lobster, Panulirusregius, on rocky bottoms at depths of around 40 m. Artisanal fishing accounts for over 70% of annual landings (Quaatey, 1997).

Lagas canoes are worth mentioning. These are motorized pirogues specializing in line and hook fishing, using insulated containers and ice to preserve high-value fish. Some of these pirogues are equipped with electronic fish detection devices, such as echo sounders. (FAO, 2007).

Fish landing site of Tema, Ghana

Semi-industrial coastal fisheries

The semi-industrial, or coastal, fleet consists of approximately 230 locally built wooden vessels equipped with inboard engines with a maximum power of 400 hp and measuring between 8 and 37 m in length. Vessels less than 12 m in length are considered small, while those between 12 and 22 m are considered medium-sized (Quaatey, 1997).
The vessels are versatile and are used for both purse seine and bottom trawl fishing. They operate as purse seiners during upwelling periods and switch to bottom trawling for the rest of the year. Purse seiners target sardinella, Spanish mackerel, and other carangid species. They fish in the same coastal waters as the artisanal fleet during upwelling periods.

Small trawlers target Gery'strigger fish (Balistes capriscus), while others exploit seabream (mainlyPagellusbellottii, Pagruscaeruleostictus and Dentex canariensis), snappers (Lutjanusfulgens and L.goreensis), red mullet (PseudupeneusPrayensis, manioc (Pseudotolithus senegalensis), burrito Brachydeuterusauritus), and groupers (Epinephelusaeneus). Bottom trawling is carried out in waters deeper than 30 m.

Semi-industrial vessels use ice to preserve fish at sea, and a fishing trip generallylasts between 3 and 5 days. The disappearance of B. capriscus from Ghanaian waters in the late 1980s had a significant impact on the sector's performance. This species was the main resource for many of these vessels. (Quaatey, 1997)

Industrial fishing

The industrial fleet currently consists of 48 trawlers, 7 pair trawlers, 2 shrimp trawlers, 26 pole-and-line tuna vessels, and 10 purse seine tuna vessels. The vessels operate from Tema and Takoradi, where there are deep-water ports. The trawlers and shrimp vessels target demersal and semi-pelagic species. As offshore vessels, these trawlers are required by law to operate in waters deeper than 30 meters (Fisheries Act No. 625 of 2002).

The industrial fleet has freezing facilities to preserve fish at sea and can remain at sea for months. It is reported that the industrial fleet has expanded considerably since 1984, when Ghanaian government policy targeted industrial fishing as a mechanism for promoting non-traditional exports (Quaatey, 1997; FAO, 2007).

Trawlers are typically over 35 m long and equipped with engines of over 600 hp, while shrimp trawlers can be up to 30 m long with engines of over 350 hp. Originally, these trawlers fished off the west and south west coasts of Africa, particularly in the area stretching from Sierra Leone to Mauritania, and from Angola to Namibia. These vessels were forced to leave these waters following the enforcement of the 200 nautical mile EEZ law by these countries.

The law restricts commercial shrimp fishing between 1°45′W and 2°30′W and 0°15′E and 1°12′E, and in waters deeper than 30 m. These vessels mainly target pink shrimp (Penaeusnotialis). All shrimp caught by these vessels are exported. The bycatch of these shrimp vessels consists of finfish, including sole, manna-fish, seabream, cuttlefish, and red mullet.

The law requires industrial trawlers to operate in waters deeper than 30 m. However, beyond the 75 m depth line, the seabed is impracticable, which limits their area of operation. The industrial fleet has expanded considerably since the launch of Ghana's Economic Recovery Program in 1984. Among other things, this program aimed to promote non-traditional exports in order to generate foreign exchange for the country. The number of trawlers in operation increased from 10 in 1984 to 33 in 1995.

These vessels target species such as cuttlefish, seabream, grouper, snapper, sole, and cassava for export. Commercial shrimp fishing also resumed in 1986 with two vessels, and then increased to 18. Two shrimp vessels currently operate in Ghana. Industrial vessels have freezing facilities to store fish on board and can remain at sea for several months..

Tuna vessels mainly catch yellowfin tuna (Thunnusalbacares), skipjack tuna (Katsuwonuspelamis), and bigeye tuna (Thunnusobesus). Most tuna vessels are operated as joint ventures, with Ghanaian owners holding at least 50% of the shares, as required by Fisheries Act No. 625 of 2002.

Inland fisheries

Lake Volta, reservoirs associated with irrigation and drinking water projects, and fish ponds are the main sources of fresh water fish in Ghana.

Fishing in Lake Volta (with an area of 8,480 km² and 5,200 km of shoreline) contributes to approximately 90% of Ghana's total inland fishery production, or about 90,000 tons.

Approximately 80,000 fishermen and 20,000 fish processors and traders are involved in fishing on Lake Volta. 17,500 canoes are actively fishing there. The fishing gear used includes gillnets, cast nets, lines, and traps. The species landed are cichlids (38.1%), Chrysichthysspp. (34.4%), and Synodontisspp. (11.4%).

To control illegal fishing activities on Lake Volta, the Ghanaian government recently acquired a modern patrol vessel to reinforce the control efforts undertaken by the Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Division of the Fisheries Directorate.

Main resources of the marine subsector

Maritime activities range from artisanal fishing in canoes to coastal fishing and industrial activities. Pelagic and demersal fishery resources are exploited. Sea fishing in Ghana is affected by a seasonal upwelling that occurs in Ghanaian coastal waters. During upwelling periods (December/January-February and July-September), marine biological activity increases, leading to increased fish food production and an abundance of most marine fish.

These periods are the main fishing seasons in Ghana:

1. Fisheries resources can be classified as follows:
2. Small pelagic species (Clupeidae [sardinella] and Engraulidae [anchovy]
3. Large pelagic species (Scombroidei [tuna-like fish])
4. Demersal species of the families Sparidae, Lutjamdae, Mullidae, Pomadasydae, Serranidae, Polynidae, and Penaedae (FAO, 2007)

Pelagic resources

Small pelagic resources
The biomass of small pelagic resources fluctuates considerably. However, it is estimated that the maximum catch that the small pelagic fishery can sustainis 180,000 tons. Sardinella landings fluctuate so much that they reached levels close to collapse in certain years (e.g., 1973 and 1978), then increased remarkably from the 1980s onwards, reaching an all-time high of 140,000 tons in 1992. Since then, landings have declined to 64,000 tons in 1997. According to some authors, the abundance of Spanish mackerel (Scomberjaponicus) varies so much from year to year that it is almost impossible to predict. Similarly, anchovy landings have fluctuated between 19,000 tons in 1986 and 82,700 tons in 1996, with a historic record of 93,000 tons in 1987. (FAO, 2007).

Large pelagic resources
The main commercial tuna species found in Ghanaian waters are yellowfin tuna (Thunnus albacares), skipjack tuna (Katsuwonus pelamis), and bigeye tuna (Thunnusobesus). In 1999, the total catch exceeded 83,000 tons, but the average landings for the period 2000-2002 were 67,000 tons.

Demersal resources
Biomass estimates from studies show that the potential yield of total demersal biomass on the Ghanaian continental shelf is between 36,000 and 55,000 tons per year, with an average of around 43,000 tons. However, landings over the last decade, at around 50,000 tons per year, have exceeded this estimated potential yield, demonstrating the pressure on the fishery (Quaatey, 1997; FAO, 2007).

Shrimp resources
Although there is a specialized shrimp fishery in Ghana, shrimp are caught by all fleets (except tuna vessels), mainly in shallow waters and near estuaries. Artisanal fishermen catch shrimp mainly with beach seines; these are generally juvenile shrimp of verylow commercial value.

Using a modeling approach, the maximum sustainableyield (MSY) for shrimp is estimated at 350 tons per year, excluding catches by artisanal fishermen. Although catches have never exceeded this calculated MSY, the sector has shown signs of decline over the past six years. (FAO, 2007).

Source – FAO : WWW.FAO.ORG


Photo source: Fisheries Commission HQ

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Statistics on the marketing of fishery products in Ghana

Import activities

January 2020 - September 2025 (volume in TM)

Country	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mauritania	1 963 292,03	72 293,68	75 093,82	56 557,36	76 940,92	55 379,90
Guinea-Bissau	7 549,73	164 491,65	1 3230,00	5 438,08	0	0
Morocco	4 411,41	23 425,54	12 546,23	13 880,51	13 895,23	5 133,20
Senegal	485,05	0	134,00	395,90	40,00	415,00
Las Palmas	218,40	0	0	0	0	0
Namibia	189,00	1 628,68	0	0	0	0
South Africa	52,00	0	0	26,94	0	0
Côte d'Ivoire	50,00	23 155,00	12 660,56	1 894,00	829,55	106,60
Angola	0	49 409,68	8 589,23	8 347,75	0	0
Sierra Leone	0	1 215,00	764,15	0	0	0
Gambia	0	0	5 619,14	27,00	0	0
Egypt	0	0	1,00	0	0	0
Seychelles	0	0	0	28,00	0	0
Total	**1 976 247,62**	**335 619,23**	**27 634,08**	**86 595,54**	**91 705,70**	**61 034,70**

Despite this potential in fishery resources, Ghana is not self-sufficient in fishery production. Its exports consist mainly of tuna species. To meet domestic demand for fishery products, Ghana turns to African countries such as Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, and Senegal. According to the table above, from 2020 to 2025, Mauritania ranks first among Ghana's fish suppliers, followed by Guinea-Bissau and Morocco.

Source : Fisheries Commission of Ghana

Export activities

Ghana: Exports of fishery products by species: January 2023 - September 2025 (volume in MT)

Species	2023	2024	2025
Skipjack tuna (Katsuwonuspelamis)		21 846,20	11 057,40
Yellowfin tuna (Thunnusalbacares)		17981,50	6 311,00
Cuttlefish (Sepiaspp.)		536,90	457,13
Bigeye tuna (Thunnusobesus)		80,00	161,00
Octopus (Octopus vulgaris)		72,40	93,19
Squid (Loligo spp)		3,60	137,70
Lobster		0	7,18
Total	**21 931,10**	**40 520,60**	**18 224,60**

Source : Fisheries Commission of Ghana

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