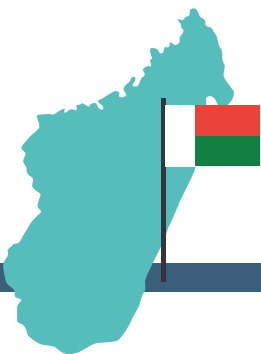


Fisheries  
Transparency  
Initiative

# Know Your Fisheries!

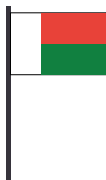


## PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE OF FISHERIES



A guide for stakeholders in **Madagascar**  
to benefit from the implementation of the  
**Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)**

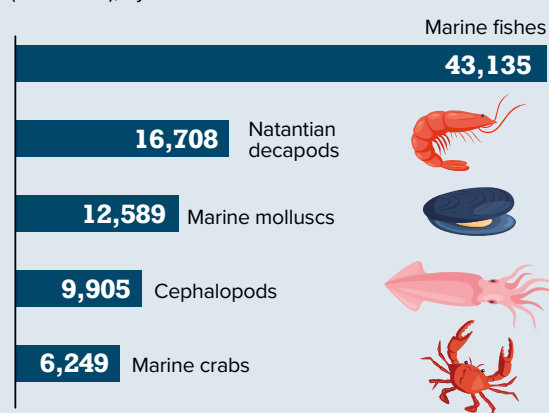
## MARINE FISHERIES IN MADAGASCAR



Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world, and is home to one of the world's most biodiverse ocean habitats. Marine fishing and fish trade are central to Madagascar's society, providing jobs, nutritious food and a source of government revenue, and representing an important element in the fabric of the nation's culture and tradition.

### Top 5 marine species

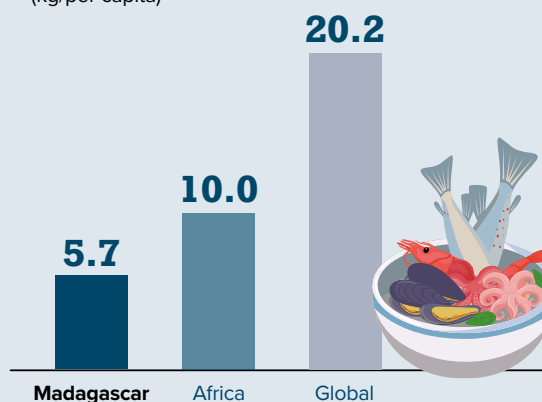
(as of 2019), by volume in tonnes:



Source: FAO, Madagascar GLOBEFISH Market Profile 2019

### Fish available for consumption

(kg/per capita)



Sources: FAO, The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022; FAO, Madagascar GLOBEFISH Market Profile 2019

### Annual production capacity



**750 USD million**

Contribution of 6.6% to Madagascar's total exports

Sources: World Bank, South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth Project (SWIOFish2)

### Employment and livelihoods

(estimates)

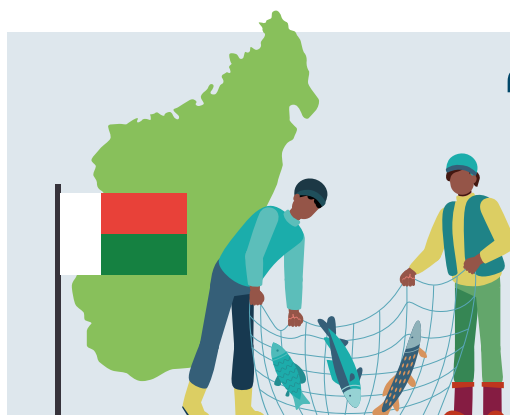
**470,000**

Direct employment in fisheries

**1,500,000**

Livelihoods from fisheries (most of which come from coastal areas)

Source: World Bank, South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth Project (SWIOFish2)



**“Although fishing is essential for the Madagascar economy, as well as for the livelihood of several thousand individuals, this sector faces numerous and complex challenges. One of the most fundamental issues is finding ways to balance conservation and exploitation of fisheries resources.”**

Source: World Bank, South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth Project (SWIOFish2)

## SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES NEED TRANSPARENCY!

**Fisheries are under threat all around the world.** In Madagascar, diverse marine ecosystems are facing unprecedented degradation from climate change, pollution and overfishing, with small-scale and industrial fishing boats competing for dwindling catches. The need for sustainable management of fisheries is urgent.

**The government of Madagascar has a fundamental obligation to manage common resources, such as fish, on behalf of its citizens.** But this creates a complex challenge: to ensure that fishing and fish trade contribute to income, employment, food and nutrition for millions of people, while conserving marine biodiversity for present and future generations.

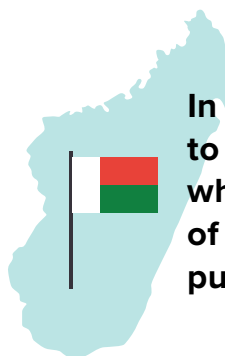
**While public availability of information is critical to achieving sustainable fisheries, transparency in fisheries management is often insufficient.** Many governments have not prioritised transparency, meaning important information on the fisheries sector is either unavailable to the public or, when available, is not widely shared. Moreover, the information governments do publish is often lacking in quality or objectivity, is presented in ways that make it inaccessible to citizens, or is disseminated in an untimely manner.

### Enhancing transparency is a critical step in improving fisheries governance!



*“Lack of basic transparency could be seen as an underlying facilitator of all the negative aspects of the global fisheries sector – IUU fishing, fleet overcapacity, overfishing, ill-directed subsidies, corruption, poor fisheries management decisions, etc. A more transparent sector would place a spotlight on such activities whenever they occur, making it harder for perpetrators to hide behind the current veil of secrecy and requiring immediate action to be taken to correct the wrong.”*













Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010




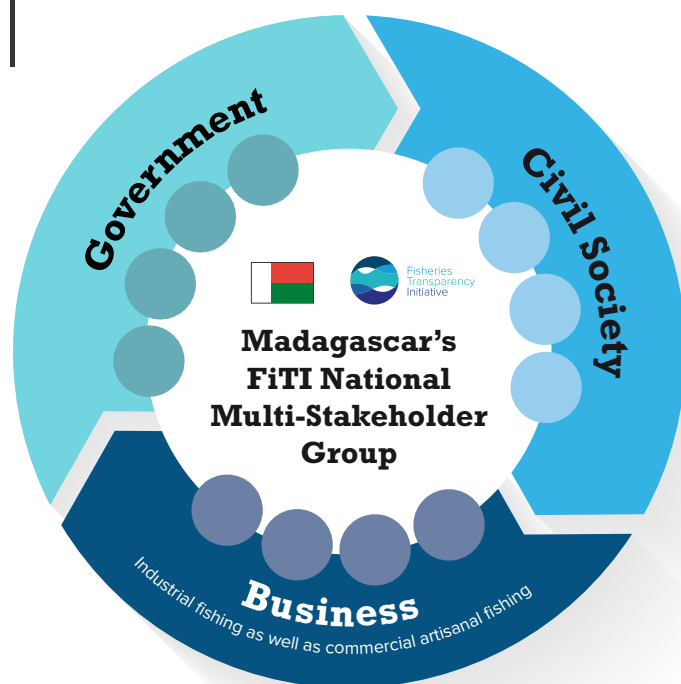
**In September 2021, Madagascar's government committed to implement the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI), which will increase the accessibility, quality and credibility of national fisheries information and enhance informed public debates.**

## ABOUT THE FISHERIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE (FiTI)

The FiTI is a global initiative that supports countries in increasing public access to marine fisheries information. The FiTI Standard is the FiTI's internationally-recognised transparency framework specifying what information governments should be publishing online. It is organised into 12 thematic areas.

- |    |   |   |    |   |                                    |     |   |                                 |
|----|---|---|----|---|------------------------------------|-----|---|---------------------------------|
| #1 |    | Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents | #5 |    | Large-Scale Fisheries              | #9  |    | Labour Standards                |
| #2 |    | Fisheries Tenure Arrangements                             | #6 |    | Small-Scale Fisheries              | #10 |    | Fisheries Subsidies             |
| #3 |    | Foreign Fishing Access Agreements                         | #7 |    | Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade | #11 |    | Official Development Assistance |
| #4 |  | The State of the Fisheries Resources                      | #8 |  | Fisheries Law Enforcement          | #12 |  | Beneficial Ownership            |

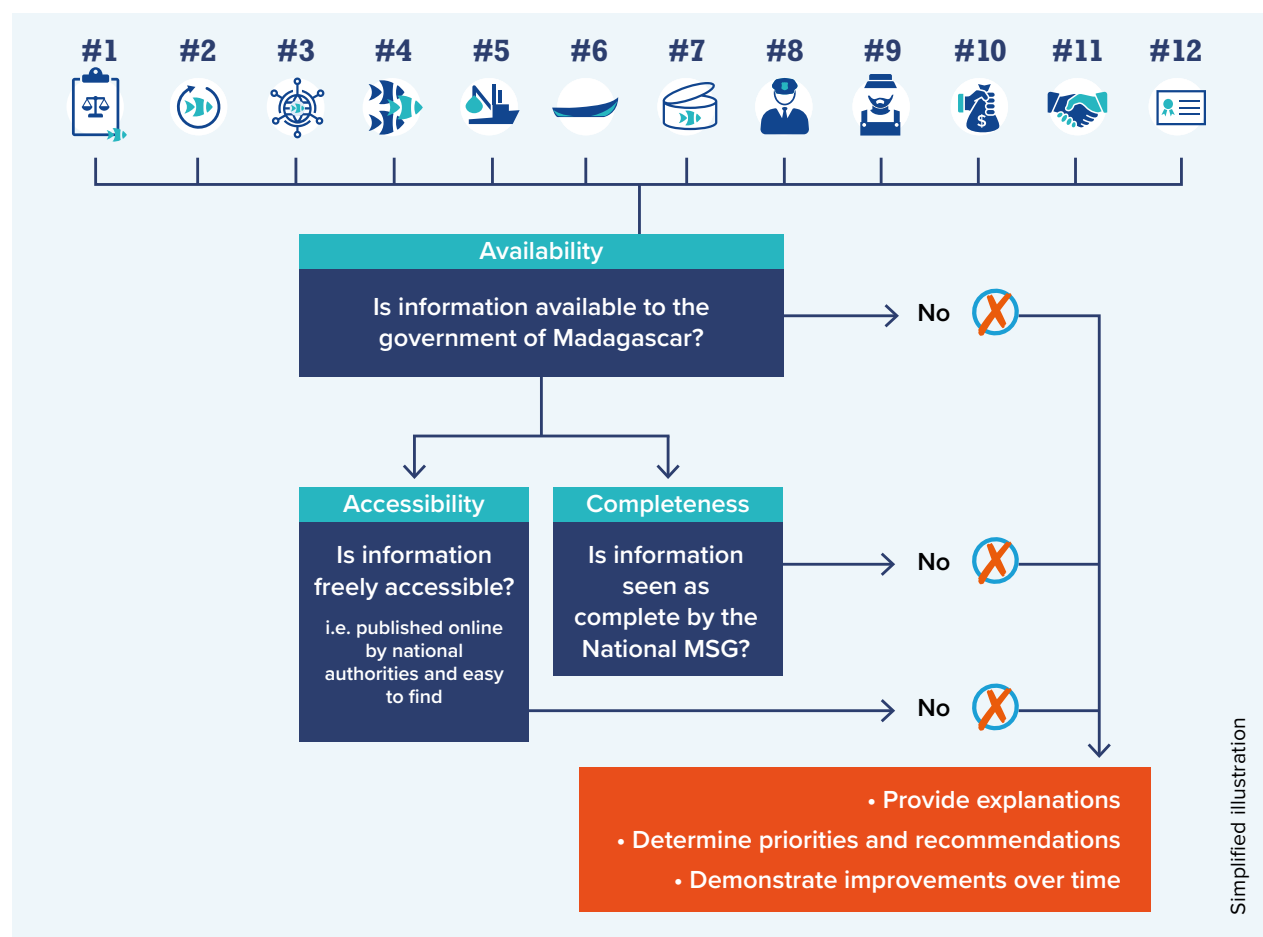
 In Madagascar, the FiTI is implemented by a National Multi Stakeholder Group (MSG), consisting of 12 members, equally represented by the government, the business sector and civil society.



Implementation is overseen by the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy and is regularly validated by the International Board of the FiTI.

## FiTI REPORTS – REGULAR REPORTS ON THE STATUS OF FISHERIES TRANSPARENCY

Each year, **Madagascar's National MSG publishes a FiTI Report** that assesses the availability, accessibility and completeness of the marine fisheries information described in the 12 thematic areas of the FiTI Standard.



The report also **summarises key information** on Madagascar's marine fisheries sector to increase public understanding and appreciation.



*Madagascar's government does not need to have complete data for every thematic area from the beginning.*

*Instead, public authorities must disclose the information they have, and where important gaps exist, **demonstrate improvements over time.***

# EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY

Transparency – meaning public access to information – is a concept that is hard to disagree with. However, it is often mistaken as the simple process of putting facts and figures into the public domain, for example through government websites. Yet achieving sustainable fisheries is a complex challenge which cannot be tackled by one actor alone (e.g. the government). Instead, a collaborative approach that draws on the knowledge and experiences of multiple actors is needed for creating an enabling environment for sustainable fisheries.

Transparency facilitates **participatory governance** – defined as the ability of stakeholders to participate in and monitor decision-making processes. And with Madagascar now embarked on a transformative journey towards transparency through the FiTI, all stakeholders – whether from the public sector, business sector or civil society – have a role to play in contributing to the sustainable management of the country's fisheries.

## Transparency in fisheries enables:

### Public authorities



- Government
- Judiciary (e.g. public prosecutor)
- Law enforcement agencies

- to determine national priorities and policies, based on the best available data;
- to respond promptly to information requests (e.g. from citizens, investors, international partners);
- to improve collaboration between different government bodies and non-governmental stakeholders;
- to publicise their efforts in sustainable fisheries management and support for the fisheries sector;
- to counter rumours, misinformation and unfair criticism.

### Parliamentarians



- Members of National Assembly
- Members of Senate
- Representatives of parliamentary committees

- to scrutinise the work of the government and hold it accountable for fisheries management decisions;
- to debate and approve legislative initiatives (e.g. fisheries laws);
- to review and adopt a national budget that supports the development of Madagascar's fisheries sector (including e.g. the priorities of the Ministry responsible for fisheries).

### Fishers



- Large-scale fishing companies
- Small-scale fishing associations
- Traditional fishing communities

- to make better informed business decisions;
- to participate more effectively in decision-making processes and engage in public debates on the management of the fisheries sector;
- to raise awareness about the sector's contribution to the development of Madagascar.



## Transparency in fisheries enables:

### Civil society



- Marine conservation NGOs
- Transparency initiatives
- Social movements
- Individual activists

- to monitor coherence between public policies and actual implementation;
- to hold the government accountable for fisheries management decisions;
- to identify collaboration opportunities that improve wider good governance efforts;
- to contribute to public discussions on key fisheries topics.

### Media



- Media organisations (print, broadcast, digital)
- Investigative reporters
- Freelance journalists

- to raise public awareness on key developments in the fisheries sector;
- to give a voice to marginalised fisheries stakeholders (e.g. women);
- to monitor commitments made by public officials.

### Academia



- Universities
- Schools
- Think tanks

- to identify knowledge gaps that require new research;
- to analyse public policies and practices to recommend improvements.

### International partners



- Seafood retailers
- Investors
- Credit agencies
- Donors
- Intergovernmental organisations (e.g. World Bank, FAO)

- to base investment/sourcing decisions on trustworthy information;
- to provide technical and financial support to address information gaps;
- to coordinate more effectively with other partners working towards the same goals.

## GIVING MEANING TO TRANSPARENCY

A core objective of the FiTI is that information published by the government of Madagascar stimulates public debates on the country's marine fisheries and allows stakeholders to participate in reforms towards better governance of the sector.

There are three concrete ways in which stakeholders in Madagascar stand to benefit from the implementation of the FiTI:

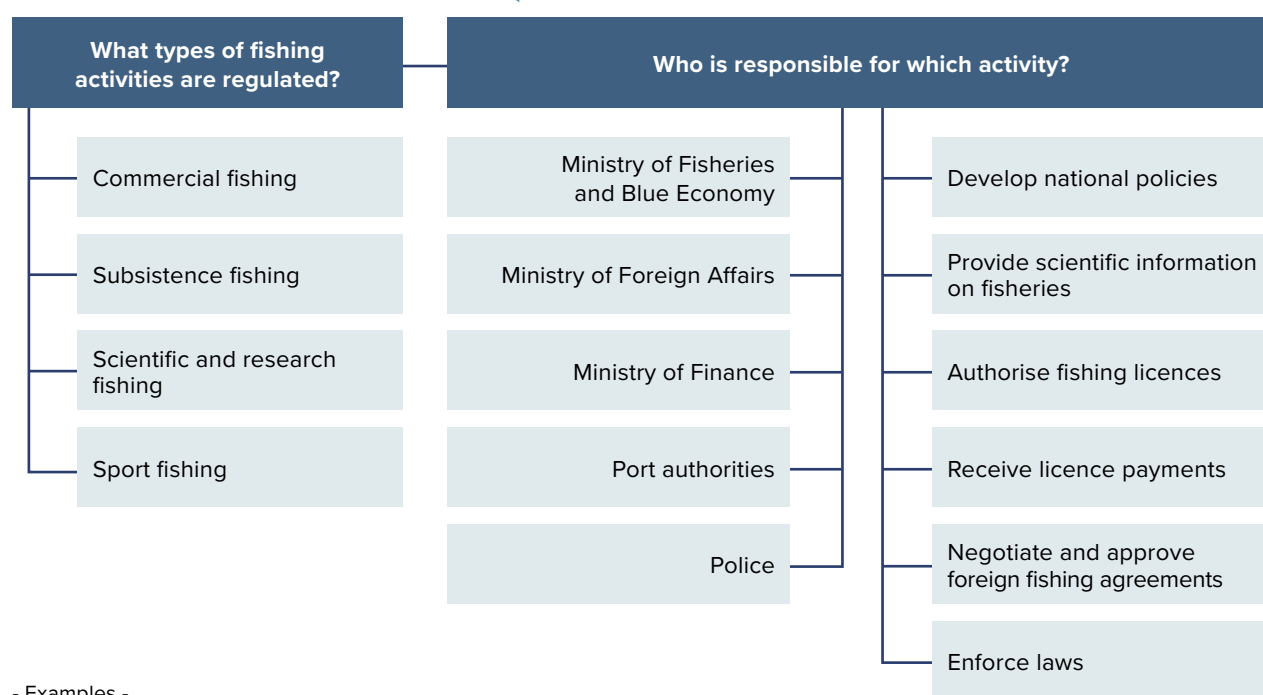


Given the complexity of fisheries management, engaging in these three activities is not always a straightforward task. However, by increasing public access to fisheries information through the FiTI, Madagascar's government is providing its citizens and business partners with the necessary means to participate in informed public debates.



## Addressing critical questions about Madagascar's fisheries

### How is Madagascar's fishing sector regulated?



- Examples -

Fisheries management is surprisingly complicated. In particular, fisheries regulations – defining how fishing rights are accessed, used and managed – can be hard to understand. Furthermore, the sector is usually managed through multiple authorities at the national, sub-national or even regional<sup>1</sup> level, which can make it difficult to understand the priorities, roles and responsibilities of different entities. This complexity is a barrier to oversight and accountability in the fishing sector.

**How does the FiTI help?** The information published through the FiTI helps to illustrate the management responsibilities of different government authorities in Madagascar. Another key component is the requirement to publish a summary text written in accessible language on fisheries tenure. In addition, the FiTI requires that all laws on fisheries are published, as well as the contracts of all foreign fishing agreements signed by the government of Madagascar.

Relevant thematic areas of the FiTI Standard:



#1



#2



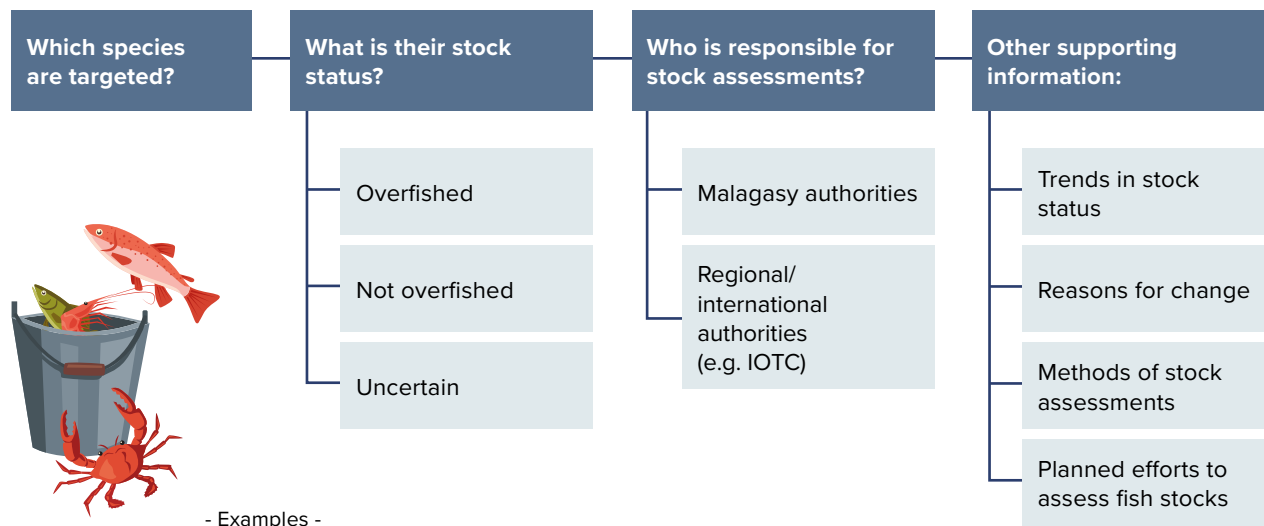
#3



#8

<sup>1</sup> For example, Madagascar is a member of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), which regulates the extraction of tuna by vessels of different nationalities that takes place more than 200 nautical miles outside the jurisdiction of its member states (including Madagascar).

## How healthy are Madagascar's fish stocks?



National authorities face a complex challenge: maximising the productivity and economic value of fisheries, while also conserving marine biodiversity. With widespread concerns about decreasing fish populations, the health of fish stocks is one of the most in-demand pieces of information on fisheries management. Unfortunately, such information is often not accessible, is outdated and too complicated to understand, or is not trusted by the public.



**How does the FiTI help?** The FiTI requires Madagascar's national authorities to publish all available scientific stock assessments on its national fisheries, as well as findings of stock assessments conducted by international organisations (e.g. IOTC). In addition, Madagascar's national authorities need to provide information summarising the health of the most commercially important species.

As the health of fish stocks is impacted by a variety of different factors, the FiTI also requires the publication of catch, discard and fishing effort information. Having access to such information can help identify inconsistencies within government regulations that, for example, seek to limit fish catches. It can also respond to concerns that Madagascar's government is licencing too many fishing vessels.

Relevant  
thematic areas of  
the FiTI Standard:



#4

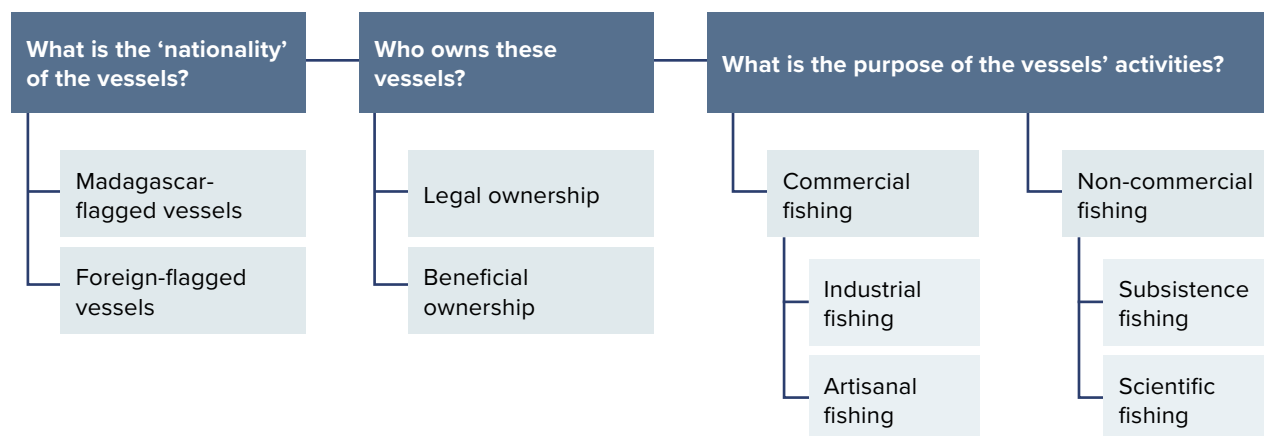


#5



#6

## Who is allowed to fish in Madagascar's waters?



- Examples -

Vessel registration details are key pieces of information for supporting the protection of the marine environment. This is particularly relevant as access to fish becomes increasingly competitive and a source of conflict and criticism for governments. Governments are under mounting pressure to restrict access to some groups and increase opportunities for others.

Furthermore, understanding which vessels are legally authorised to fish in Madagascar's waters is a prerequisite to determining illegal fishing activities.

**How does the FiTI help?** The FiTI requires Madagascar's government to publish an online, up-to-date registry of all Madagascar-flagged and foreign-flagged industrial vessels that are authorised to fish in the country's waters, and of all Madagascar-flagged vessels that are authorised to fish in foreign waters and on the High Seas.

Furthermore, aggregated information on the number of small-scale fishing vessels in Madagascar needs to be published. Finally, Madagascar's authorities need to provide information on the current status of and discussions around beneficial ownership transparency in fisheries.

Relevant  
thematic areas of  
the FiTI Standard:



#3



#5



#6

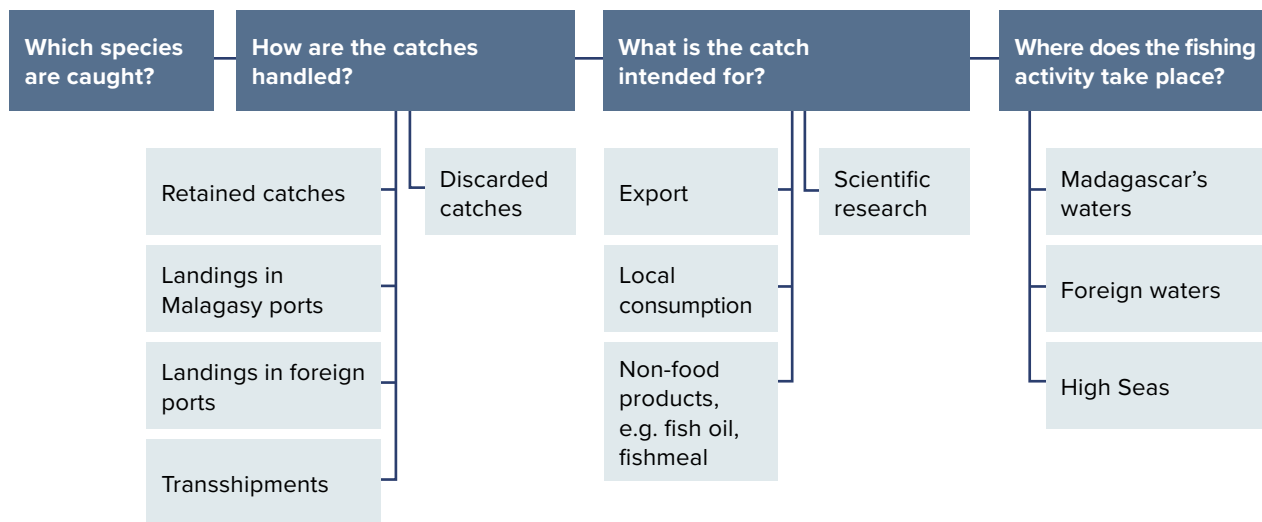


#12\*

\* The FiTI does not request the names of individual beneficial owners related to fishing activities, e.g. vessel owner.



## How much fish is caught in Madagascar's waters?



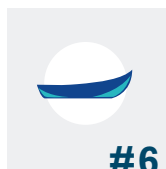
- Examples -

Public information on who catches what is often not available or is hard to understand. This can lead to popular misconceptions or allegations, such as governments allowing foreign fishing vessels to catch a large amount of national fish resources. Furthermore, government information on the catches made by small-scale or subsistence fishers often lacks quality and reliability.



**How does the FiTI help?** Reliable catch data is a crucial piece of information – the FiTI requests Madagascar's authorities to publish detailed catch information on the industrial fishing fleets as well as (more aggregated) information on catches made by small-scale fishers. This includes not only information about retained catches, but also discards (if such information is available to the government).

**Relevant thematic areas of the FiTI Standard:**



The FiTI does not request information about the exact location of fishing activities within Madagascar's waters. Only aggregated, annual information about catches within Madagascar's waters as well as catches in foreign waters or on the High Seas need to be published.



## How much does Madagascar earn from its fisheries resources?

### What are the direct activity-related revenues from fishing?

Fishing licences fees

Landing fees

Excess catch fees

Other service charges

### What other revenues does the government receive from fishing?

Taxes

Customs on imports/  
exports

Fines and penalties

- Examples -



Commercial fisheries can be a source of significant public revenue. Selling fishing licences to foreign fishing vessels, for example, is often justified on the grounds that this creates public wealth. However, government revenues derived from the fishing sector are often hard to determine, as several government agencies might be involved in collecting different fees. This can also make the fisheries sector vulnerable to corruption.

**How does the FiTI help?** The FiTI requires governments to publish detailed information on the range of fees they apply to the fishing sector and information on how these fees are processed and by whom. The FiTI also requires governments to disclose per-vessel payments in the large-scale sector, information on payments received through foreign fishing agreements and aggregated sums derived from small-scale fisheries. In addition, the FiTI requires governments to publish information on the fines paid by fishing firms for violations of the law. All this information can be combined to gain a comprehensive picture of total public revenues from the sector.

**Relevant  
thematic areas of  
the FiTI Standard:**



**#2**



**#3**



**#5**

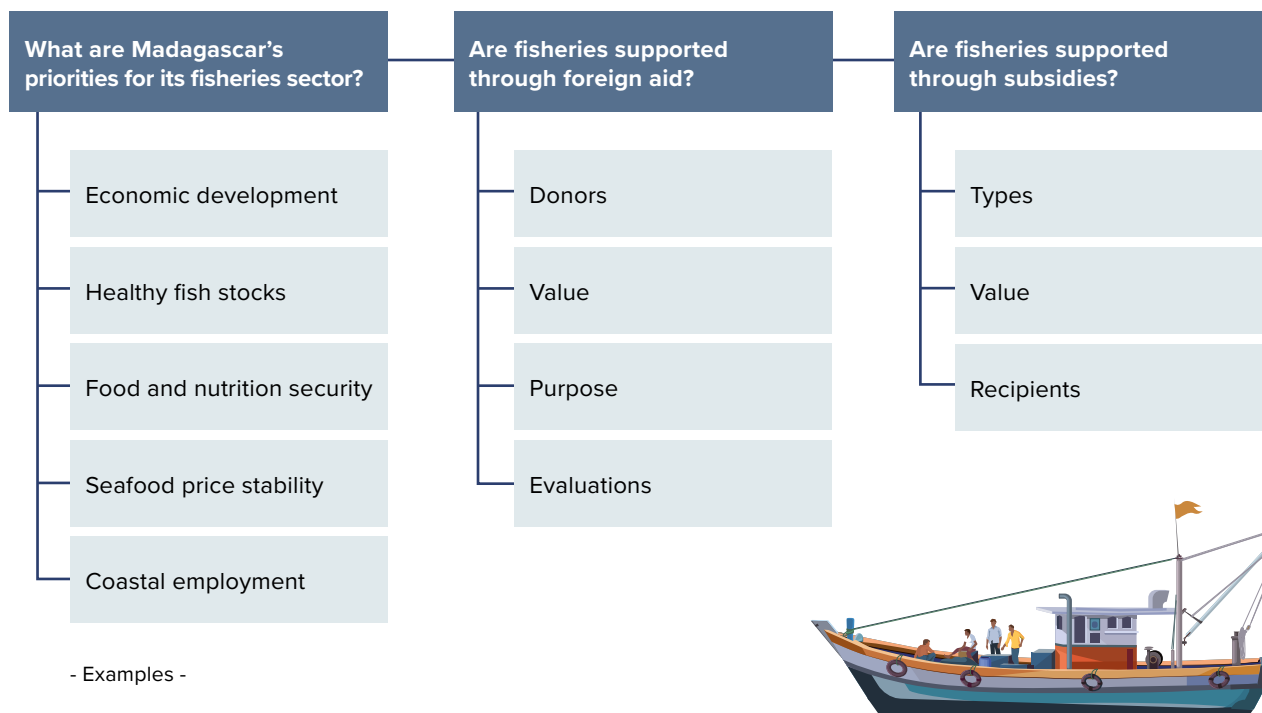


**#6**



**#8**

## How is Madagascar's government supporting the fisheries sector?



Most governments support their fisheries sectors in an attempt to meet national priorities, such as economic development (e.g. by issuing fishing authorisations) or protecting fish stocks (e.g. through Marine Protected Areas). There are several ways for governments to do this, one of which is through projects financed by foreign donors. Madagascar has historically been the recipient of significant aid programmes targeting fisheries, from donors including the World Bank, the EU, France and Japan.

Furthermore, governments often support the sector by subsidising fishing operations. A lack of information on such government support not only impedes the possibility for effective oversight, accountability and public dialogue, but also limits informed public participation in decision-making over how such support mechanisms should be used.

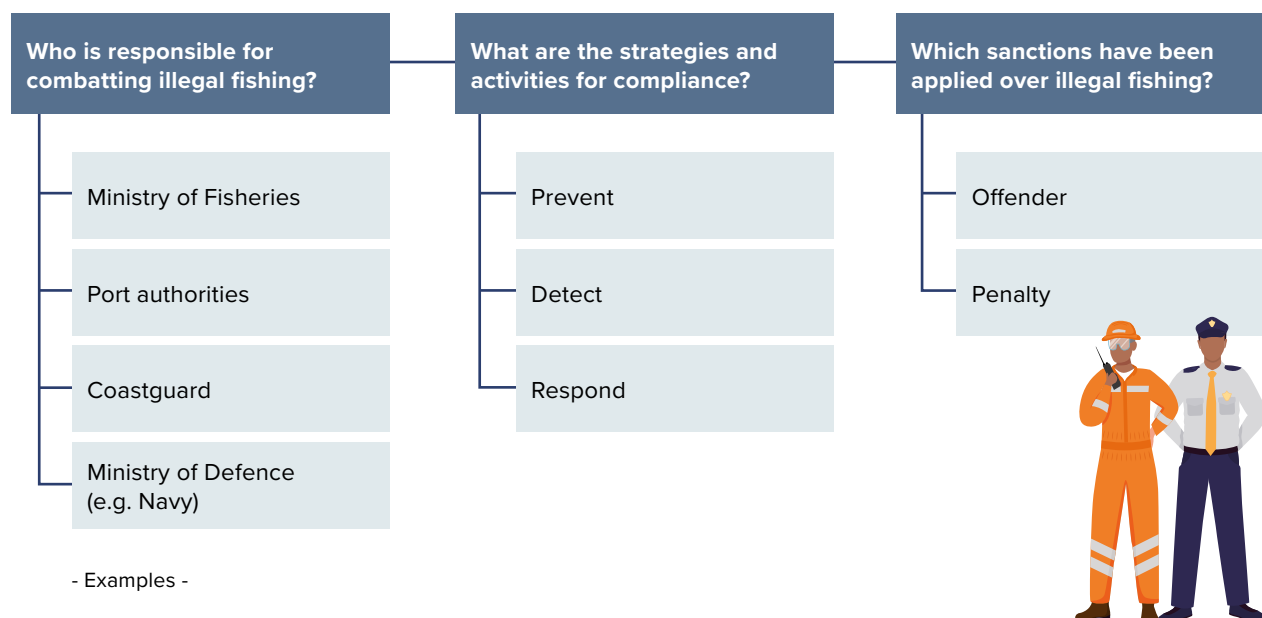


**How does the FiTI help?** Madagascar's government will publish relevant policy documents that relate to the management of marine fisheries. FiTI requires Madagascar's government to publish comprehensive annual information on subsidies, including the beneficiaries of these transfers. Likewise, national authorities must publish details of individual aid projects in fisheries and marine conservation, including evaluation reports (where these have been conducted).

**Relevant thematic areas of the FiTI Standard:**



## How well is Madagascar's government protecting its waters from illegal fishing?



Madagascar is seen as being highly vulnerable to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, partly because of its limited ability to police its waters. Increasing attention is focusing on how public authorities respond to this challenge.<sup>2</sup> However, public information on the resources deployed by the government to monitor fishing vessels is often inadequate and so too is information on the penalties and fines imposed on those found guilty of serious offences. This makes it difficult to understand whether responses to illegal fishing are effective.



**How does the FiTI help?** Under the FiTI, national authorities must publish information on their policies and activities to monitor and control fishing activities, as well as publish up-to-date information on the outcomes of investigations into serious offences. This information can be combined with information on the regulation of commercial fisheries and foreign fishing agreements to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by IUU fishing and the adequacy of national responses.

**Relevant thematic areas of the FiTI Standard:**



<sup>2</sup> For example, Madagascar is implementing the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), which seeks to ensure that fish caught from IUU fishing do not enter Madagascar's ports (i.e. Antsiranana, Ehoala, Mahajanga, Toamasina and Toliara) and ultimately, do not reach national and international markets.



## Identifying knowledge gaps to improve fisheries information over time






A lack of transparency in fisheries management is not always intentional. Many governments face challenges in collating information on their fisheries sectors. Yet governments with poor levels of transparency are often viewed negatively, as if driven by the desire to hide information from public scrutiny. However, what may be perceived as opacity or secretive practices can be the result of other factors, such as a lack of technical, financial or human resources. Unfortunately, these arguments can also be used as a convenient excuse to avoid scrutiny.

Annual FiTI Reports help to address this situation by supporting Malagasy stakeholders to answer critical questions about their country's fisheries sector. Just as importantly, they also reveal where gaps exist, i.e. information that has not even been collected or compiled yet.

Such information gaps vary significantly depending on the national context. However, the FiTI's experience shows that there are several common areas where public authorities tend to lack fisheries information:

Examples

<b>Discards</b>  	<p>Many types of fisheries lead to fish being discarded at sea.<sup>3</sup> Discarded fish are not only a waste of a precious resource, but can also limit the contribution of fisheries to national food security.</p> <p>A lack of information on this topic can significantly affect fisheries management, for example, impacting the accuracy of stock assessments and the subsequent setting of fishing authorisations.</p>
<b>Food and nutrition security contributions</b>  	<p>Due to their particular nutritional value, fish are a major force for combatting hunger and malnutrition. This is critical in a country such as Madagascar that faces food insecurity and high levels of poverty, including in rural areas.</p> <p>A lack of information can lead to an underappreciation of the sector in national policies, which often need to balance economic, conservation and food security objectives.</p>
<b>Economic value of small-scale fisheries</b>  	<p>National information on the economic value of small-scale fisheries is regularly of poor quality, with fisheries not being adequately identified as an occupation in national census data. Compounding this is the fact that many people involved in fisheries are undocumented and form part of the informal economy.</p> <p>A lack of information means that the real value of small-scale fisheries is underappreciated and the number of people involved in the sector, particularly women, is undervalued. This often leads to their marginalisation in policy-making processes as well as inequitable flows of government support.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Discards refer to fish that are caught but then not retained and instead returned to the ocean (either dead or alive). Discard levels vary widely from fishery to fishery.







### Labour rights



Working in fisheries is among the most arduous and dangerous occupations in the world. There are also growing concerns that national laws protecting the rights of those working in fisheries, including national and foreign workers employed in the fishing sector at sea and in post-harvest activities, are inadequate or poorly enforced. A lack of information can undermine the governance to ensure that workers' rights are respected. It can also limit collaboration between fishing authorities and those government departments responsible for addressing labour rights issues.

### Beneficial ownership



Information on the natural person who ultimately owns or controls a business, such as a fishing vessel or a processing plant, is often not collected by governments. This is despite the fact that many countries, including Madagascar have already made commitments to beneficial ownership transparency. But often, these national endeavours are not put into practice within the fisheries sector.

Opacity around beneficial ownership is an enabler for several governance challenges. These include the ability to disguise the abuse of entrusted power, to shield offenders from prosecution and liabilities, to avoid taxes and to hide excessive foreign ownership or economic concentration.

While the FiTI's principle of '**progressive improvement**' means that Madagascar does not need to have complete information on all 12 thematic areas from the beginning, such information gaps clearly impede the government's ability to manage fisheries sustainably, as well as stakeholders' ability to properly understand their fisheries sector.









A core responsibility of **Madagascar's National Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG)** is to identify these gaps and provide **recommendations** on how to address them over time.<sup>4</sup> These collective recommendations – as well as periodic updates on their implementation status – are published in Madagascar's FiTI Reports and can therefore be monitored by all stakeholders and appreciated by international partners.

<sup>4</sup> This may include, for example, partnerships with academic institutions and foreign donors, or the utilisation of existing policy instruments, such as national labour market surveys to capture information on the fisheries sector.

## Recognising inconsistencies between priorities, policies and practices in fisheries

Information published by the Malagasy government in line with the requirements of the FiTI Standard can help to identify knowledge gaps and to address critical questions about individual aspects of Madagascar's fisheries sector, such as 'who is allowed to fish?'. Furthermore, by combining information from several areas of fisheries management, stakeholders can also identify inconsistencies between national fisheries priorities, public policies and actual practices. In doing so, stakeholders can contribute to the shared governance of the sector.

These inconsistencies vary depending on the national context. However, the following examples may be relevant for Madagascar's fisheries:

	Combining information from the FiTI Standard
Industrial catches for export outweigh small-scale fisheries catches for local consumption, despite national policies aimed at promoting fishing for domestic food security.	
Public debates accuse the government of obtaining insufficient revenues from commercial fisheries, and of failing to contribute to public wealth. However, financial information shows that licence fees and foreign fishing access agreements contribute significantly to the government's central budget.	
Fuel subsidies are given to industrial and/or artisanal fishers, allowing them to continue targeting fish species that scientific studies show are already in a state of being overfished.	
National strategies to reduce poverty through fisheries emphasise rural development, but access to fishing is restricted for small-scale and subsistence fisheries (e.g. due to Marine Protected Areas).	
Publicly available information on fishing authorisations indicates a well-diversified fisheries sector where numerous individuals and organisations can participate. However, data on the beneficial owners of these authorisations shows a concentration of wealth in the hands of a small number of affluent people.	
Despite a national commitment to fight illegal fishing, vessels authorised to fish in a country's waters include those with a record of illegal fishing in other countries' waters.	

Examples



Transforming government information from data to insights can (and often should) be a **collaborative process between government, business and civil society**. Unfortunately, transparency is often narrowly viewed as exposing governments to external scrutiny, but this overlooks the fact that an important value of transparency lies in fostering partnerships and dialogue.

Such collaboration is at the heart of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative in Madagascar.



## GOING BEYOND BASIC INFORMATION



The FiTI Standard sets out the basic transparency requirements for 12 areas of fisheries management, which are applicable to all countries.



However, Madagascar's Multi-Stakeholder Group can decide to cover additional transparency requirements in its annual FiTI Reports.

Provided by:



Fisheries  
Transparency  
Initiative

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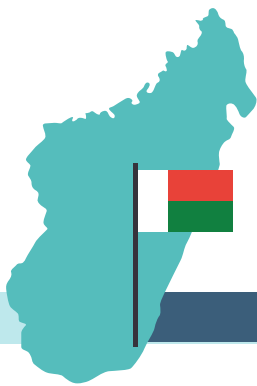


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# #KnowYourFisheries!



## HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE OCEANS ARE VITAL FOR OUR FUTURE.

The FiTI supports public authorities, businesses and the public in Madagascar to collaborate towards the sustainable management of fisheries.

[www.fiti.global](http://www.fiti.global)