



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

TAKING STOCK

Online Transparency of
Fisheries Management
Information



**Democratic Republic of
São Tomé and Príncipe**

In collaboration with:



2022 Detailed Assessment Report

© 2022 Fisheries Transparency Initiative. All rights reserved.

Researcher: Dr Andre Standing (Fisheries Transparency Initiative)

Reviewer: Mansor Ndour (Fisheries Transparency Initiative), Manuel Jorge (MAR Ambiente e Pesca Artesanal, MARAPA)



This 'TAKING STOCK: Online Transparency of Fisheries Management Information' assessment for the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe has been funded by Irish Aid.

Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. All information was believed to be correct as of September 2022. Nevertheless, the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) cannot accept responsibility for the consequences resulting from the use of this assessment or its contents by others.

The ideas, opinions and comments in this assessment are entirely the responsibility of the FiTI and do not necessarily represent or reflect Irish Aid policy.

Furthermore, in conducting this assessment, the FiTI did not investigate the veracity or completeness of the published information and did not make any judgement about the integrity of the information or practices disclosed.

We would like to thank all the individuals and institutions who contributed to the various stages of research and preparation of this assessment.

The [Fisheries Transparency Initiative \(FiTI\)](https://www.fiti.global) is a global multi-stakeholder initiative that strengthens transparency and collaboration in marine fisheries management.

By making fisheries management more transparent and inclusive, the FiTI promotes informed public debates on fisheries policies and supports the long-term contribution of the sector to national economies and the well-being of citizens and businesses that depend on a healthy marine environment.



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

www.fiti.global



TAKING STOCK: Online Transparency of Fisheries Management Information

assesses the level of information that the national authorities in São Tomé and Príncipe publish on government websites regarding the country's marine fisheries sector.

São Tomé and Príncipe's 2022 TAKING STOCK: Online Transparency of Fisheries Management Information assessment consists of this Detailed Assessment Report, as well as a comprehensive Summary Assessment Report.

Both reports, as well as information on the methodology, can be found at:

www.fiti.global/taking-stock

ABBREVIATIONS	5
DIGITAL LANDSCAPE OF SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE'S MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR	
NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT	6
NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITIES	7
GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AND NOTABLE REPORTS	8
ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES	9
DETAILED ASSESSMENT: ONLINE TRANSPARENCY OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT INFORMATION IN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE	10
1. FISHERIES LAWS, REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS	11
2. FISHERIES TENURE ARRANGEMENTS	16
3. FOREIGN FISHING ACCESS AGREEMENTS	25
4. THE STATE OF THE FISHERIES RESOURCES	28
5. LARGE-SCALE FISHERIES	30
6. SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES	38
7. POST-HARVEST SECTOR AND FISH TRADE	43
8. FISHERIES LAW ENFORCEMENT	48
9. LABOUR STANDARDS	50
10. FISHERIES SUBSIDIES	52
11. OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE	54
12. BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP	56

ABBREVIATIONS

AGAC	Association des Grands Thoniers Congélateurs
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOLEX	Legislative and policy database by the FAO
FiTI	Fisheries Transparency Initiative
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INE	National Institute for Statistics
INIC	National Institute for Innovation and Knowledge
LEGIS-PALOP	Legal database of the Portuguese Speaking African Countries
MAPDR	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development
MTSFFP	Ministry of Labour, Solidarity, Family and Vocational Training
PNADD	National Sustainable Development Plan
PRIASA	Infrastructure Rehabilitation for Food Security Support Project
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SFPA	Sustainable Fishing Partnership Agreement
UNU-EGOV	United Nations University Operating Unit on Policy Driven Electronic Governance
WACA	West Africa Coastal Areas Management Program

DIGITAL LANDSCAPE OF SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE'S MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR ¹

NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

In São Tomé and Príncipe, there is no law governing access to government information. While article 30 of the Constitution refers to freedom of expression and information, the article only expands on freedom to express and divulge thinking by word, by image or by any other means and not on information. Furthermore, article 74 of the Constitution states that political bodies have the duty to keep citizens and their organisations informed about public affairs, and shall be subject to democratic control exercised through the forms of political participation established in the Constitution and the law.

São Tomé and Príncipe is also not members of the Open Government Partnership, an international initiative promoting principles and practices of transparency through access to information.

In July 2020 the Government resolved to implement a '[National Strategy for Digital](#)

[Governance in São Tomé and Príncipe](#)'.² This is a comprehensive strategy based on international best practice to improve public services, increase citizen participation and strengthen online access to government data. It was developed in partnership with the [United Nations University Operating Unit on Policy Driven Electronic Governance](#) (UNU-EGOV). The Prime Minister of São Tomé and Príncipe is the Chairman of the Digital Governance Committee, which has the overall responsibility to ensure the execution of the strategy.

Within this strategy fisheries is designated as one of 9 thematic priorities for government information.

This strategy sets out the obligations for the MAPDR, including specific requirements for the Directorate of Fisheries (see 4.7 of the national strategy document). Services which will be digitised includes information on licenses and certificates for fishing activities, a register of fishermen, as well as information on

¹ This section is intended to provide a brief introduction to the overarching framework through which the government of São Tomé and Príncipe facilitates public access to information about its marine fisheries sector, and should not be considered an exhaustive source covering every effort, channel and stakeholder contributing to this process.

² The National Strategy for Digital Governance represents the most recent effort to improve online governance information, with the first national strategy being the 'Smart Governance to Lead the Future' programme, launched in 2002. This was replaced in 2008 by the creation of the Institute for Innovation and Knowledge (INIC), who was given the official mandate to collate and publish government information. This is also the lead government agency responsible for implementing the new National Strategy (<https://www.inic.gov.st>).

government subsidies and external financing to the sector.

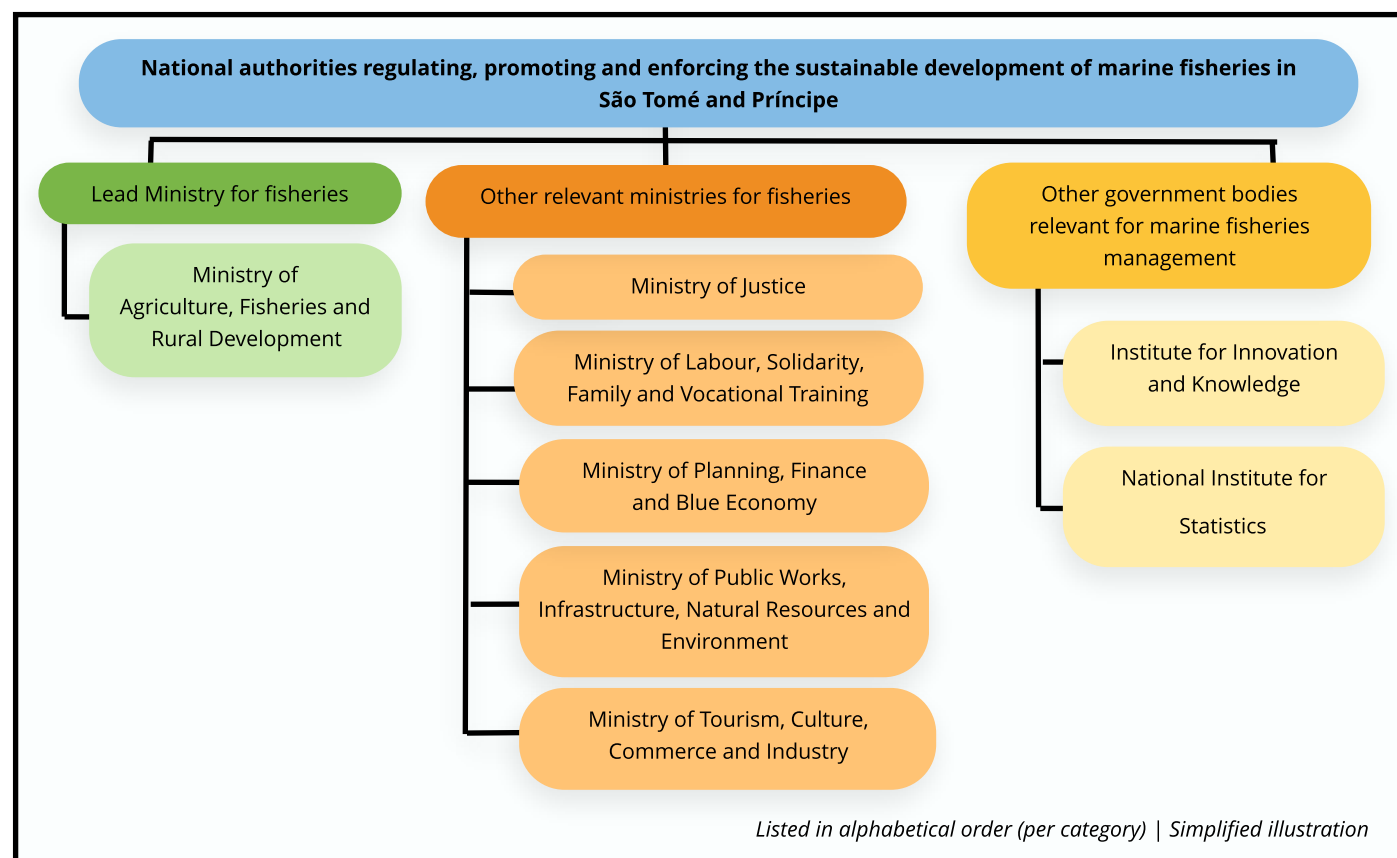
As of mid 2022, this strategy does not appear to

have been fully implemented. A core task is to publish a central portal (www.gov.st). However, this domain name is currently not in use.

NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITIES

Several national authorities regulate, promote and enforce the sustainable development of the fisheries sector in São Tomé and Príncipe. The *Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (MAPDR)* is the governing body for marine fisheries in the country. The MAPDR has several specific Directorates, which includes the Directorate of Fisheries.

Of the 12 Government Ministries (as of September 2022),³ other government organisations have responsibilities related to the management of the fisheries sector and their online information has been consulted for this report.



³ The structure of São Tomé and Príncipe's government is described in the most recent Public Diary http://ms.gov.st/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Dr_n_2019_10.-Organica-XVII-Governo.pdf

It is noteworthy to highlight that the *National Institute for Statistics (INE)* is the central executive body of the National Statistical System of São Tomé and Príncipe, and thus, responsible for the production and dissemination of official statistics. However, it was noted throughout this

assessment that fishing data is not available online on the website of the INE, as no such data has been provided to the INE for two years. Providing fisheries data to the INE does not seem to be an obligation for the MAPDR and its Directorate of Fisheries.

GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AND NOTABLE REPORTS

Within the scope of this assessment performed between December 2021 and September 2022, two different entry points have been utilised to evaluate whether information on São Tomé and Príncipe's marine fisheries sector is published online by national authorities:

- By directly accessing websites of national

authorities;

- By utilising external search engines, such as Google.

The government of São Tomé and Príncipe does not have a central government portal of online information (as stated above).

WEBSITES OF MINISTRIES RELEVANT FOR SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE' MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR ⁴

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development	[No website found, but Facebook page]
Ministry of Justice	https://www.justica.gov.st
Ministry of Labour, Solidarity, Family and Vocational Training	[Facebook page]
Ministry of Planning, Finance and Blue Economy	https://www.financas.gov.st

⁴ This TAKING STOCK assessment recognises websites as a crucial source of information for citizens. It does not, however, dismiss other means of disseminating and accessing information. Alongside government websites, numerous other channels are regularly used by public authorities to share developments, most notably social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. These platforms and channels can facilitate nearly real-time, two-way communications, enabling greater interaction between state and citizen.

Throughout this assessment process, these platforms and channels have been consulted to not only identify whether information is actively shared by government authorities, but also to determine whether information is available to national authorities in the first place, and whether the government of São Tomé and Príncipe makes the information they do hold available and easily locatable for the benefit of the general public.

Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment	[No website found]
Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Commerce and Industry	[Facebook page]

Only few of the Ministries relevant for this assessment have their own website (or these websites are currently under constructions), while other Ministries use primarily Facebook to publish news and updates.

In addition, the [National Parliament](#) of Sao Tome and Príncipe has its own website and publishes information on laws and regulations.

WEBSITES OF SUPPORTING PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS RELEVANT FOR SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE'S MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR

Websites of supporting public sector institutions relevant for São Tomé and Príncipe's marine fisheries sector	http://www.inic.gov.st
National Institute for Statistics	https://www.ine.st/

NOTABLE REPORTS AND OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES PUBLISHED BY SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE'S AUTHORITIES RELEVANT FOR ITS MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR

[None]	
--------	--

ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Social media channels and platforms play an increasingly important role in communicating government information to stakeholders and citizens. This is also the case in São Tomé and Príncipe, where

several ministries are using Facebook to share information with citizens and disseminate new regulations or public events.

DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF ONLINE TRANSPARENCY OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

This **TAKING STOCK: Online Transparency of Fisheries Management Information assessment**

evaluates and documents whether specific information relating to marine fisheries management is published online by government authorities.⁵ Only information published by government authorities is considered within the scope of this assessment, although information published by third parties is assessed to check whether government information is available at all, is up to date and is a true reflection of current government policies and activities.

This assessment covers 12 thematic areas of fisheries management, as defined by the **FiTI Standard**.⁶ These 12 thematic areas have been further broken down into a total of 39 transparency elements.

The following Detailed Assessment Report provides explanations for scorings of all

transparency elements.

It should be emphasised that several transparency elements have been assessed as **'Not applicable'**. This is because the transparency element refers to an aspect of fisheries management that is not relevant to the country.

Additionally, some information has been assessed as **'Not produced'**. This refers to information that is not in the public domain because national authorities have yet to collect or compile the relevant data, which may be due to national authorities targeting different priorities or simply because they do not have the technical, financial or human resources needed to produce such information.⁷

For further information about the methodology behind this assessment, please refer to: <https://www.fiti.global/taking-stock/methodology>.

⁵ Information disclosure through government websites and online publications remains critical in achieving transparency. This ensures information is freely available to anyone (including people outside the country), and that information – including historical data – can be accessed at any time.

⁶ The FiTI Standard is the only internationally recognised framework that defines what information on fisheries management should be published online by national authorities. The FiTI Standard was developed over two years in a global multi-stakeholder endeavour. Its objective is to contribute to the sustainability of marine fisheries by increasing the accessibility and credibility of national fisheries management information.

⁷ In the spirit of one of its key principles, namely 'progressive improvement', the FiTI does not expect all countries to have complete data for every transparency requirement from the beginning. Instead, public authorities must disclose the information they have, and where important gaps exist, demonstrate improvements over time. As such, engaging with the FiTI is not intended to be a burdensome and costly research activity. The FiTI has been designed to ensure that any country can implement it, including those where resources for collating information are limited. In fact, the FiTI may be particularly beneficial in such contexts, as it should support national authorities in their efforts to organise and present information. As this is the first TAKING STOCK assessment of the Sao Tome Y Príncipe, transparency requirements for which information is assessed as not yet existent to the government ('Not produced') will therefore not negatively impact the country's overall transparency performance.



1. FISHERIES LAWS, REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

A public record of the current laws, regulations and policy documents that relate to the management of marine fisheries is critical for ensuring transparency in the sector. Such documents are often, but not always, published by governments in a national gazette. However, transparency is undermined if it is difficult for citizens to locate these documents, which is the case when they are one of many entries in a more general national registry of official documents. To facilitate public access to laws, regulations and policy documents, the relevant public authority responsible for marine fisheries should list the key documents in one place, also providing summary information and dates of publication.

1-A | LAWS ON MARINE FISHERIES

The general legal framework regulating São Tomé and Príncipe's marine fisheries is provided through the recently adopted Fisheries and Aquaculture Law 09/2022 and the [Decree 28/2012](#) establishing the General Regulation on Fisheries and Halieutic Resources, adopted in 2012.

Additional legislation on the management of marine fisheries is also provided in [Law 13/2007](#), which covers the establishment of government institutions responsible for ensuring maritime safety, and [Decree 30/2009](#) which sets out the procedures for registering fishers and seafarers,

vessel inspections and catch reporting.

Additionally, in 2013 the government passed [Decree 41/2013](#), which covers transparency of information on the authorisation of industrial fishing licenses.

Beyond fisheries laws, there are other legislation that relate to the regulation of the fishing industry and its environmental impact. This includes [Decree 6/2014](#), on the capture and commercialization of sea turtles and their products and [Decree 3/2014](#), on the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles.

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest laws are published)	Easy to find?
Registry of national legislation related to the marine fisheries sector ⁸	Partially	No	No
	To a limited extent	No	No

Available online?

São Tomé and Príncipe's government does not provide a registry of marine fisheries laws. While the official Gazette is published on the website of the National Parliament of São Tomé and Príncipe⁹, the Gazette must be seen as incomplete, as only a copy of the Fisheries law 9/2001 could be found. Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice provides information on laws in the country; however, the information provided is again incomplete. It was not possible to find the Decree 28/2012 on this website, for example.

It was therefore difficult for the assessment to locate digital copies of the marine fisheries law on government websites. Instead, identifying the existence of laws was done through secondary research on documents published on *third-party websites* that provide copies of some São Tomé and Príncipe's fisheries laws.

This includes the online database of legal documents on food, agriculture and natural resource management collated by the UN's Food

and Agriculture Organisation; known as the [FAOLEX database](#). This includes the 2012 General Regulation on Fisheries and Halieutic Resources (Decree 28/2012), but not other Decrees, including 41/2013.

São Tomé and Príncipe laws are also collated through an intergovernmental project called 'LEGIS-PALOP'. This collates legislation from African Portuguese speaking countries and has a national contact person in the [Government of São Tomé and Príncipe](#). This website is difficult to navigate and there is no key word search function that brings up fisheries laws. However, a copy of the Decree 28/2012 can be found on this website. Nevertheless, this website is not seen as a government website for this assessment, as only information is taken into account that is published through official government websites where the government has full control on how and when data is published.

At least one important piece of legislation could

⁸ This assessment does not cover legislations at the sub-national level.

⁹ <http://www.parlamento.st> (under the tab: "Darios da AN").

not be retrieved through any of the online databases. This is [Decree 41/2013](#), which covers transparency of information on industrial fishing. Although this law is referenced in

publications regarding the governance of marine fisheries, there does not appear to be a digital copy available online anywhere.

Up to date?

It was not possible for this assessment to confirm an up-to-date list of laws relating to marine fishing, due to the fact that no registry of

marine fisheries law exists. The found information could therefore be dated.

Easy to find?

The website of MAPDR – the governing body for marine fisheries in the country – would serve as the intuitive starting point for locating fisheries-related information. However, no such website is available. Furthermore, no consolidated registry of fisheries law is provided on any other government website. Several other

ministries and public bodies do provide laws on fisheries on their websites (although incomplete), but locating such information is often very cumbersome. For example, the archive of the official gazette does not provide an online search function.

1-B | FISHERIES POLICY DOCUMENTS ¹⁰

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest policy documents are published)	Easy to find?
Comprehensive list of national policy documents	Not produced		
	Not produced		

Available online?

There is no government website that provides a list of national policy documents relating to the marine fisheries sector. A literature review also did not provide a list of national policy documents or conclusive evidence on whether national policy documents that address fisheries management in any detail are in fact produced in the country.

São Tomé and Príncipe does have a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the years 2015-2020. A component of this includes general policies in support for marine biodiversity. However, this strategy could not be found on any government website, and was located on the website of the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#).

The government of São Tomé and Príncipe has national development plans that speak in more general terms to improving the economic contribution of the sector. These include that National Sustainable Development Plan (PNADD) and the National Strategy for Poverty Alleviation. Unfortunately neither of these plans could be found on government websites.

Measures to improve the governance of fisheries are also established through bi-lateral fisheries agreements with the European Union, and there are ad hoc fisheries programmes financed by foreign donors (see 11a below).

There are no national strategies listed on the database of the FAOLEX, although these are

¹⁰ Fisheries policy documents are defined in the broadest sense as the accumulation of documents and instruments regulating the sector. A policy document includes a national strategy for fisheries development. These may be produced as standalone documents exclusively for fisheries, or fisheries may be included as one sector of a broader policy, e.g. on the marine environment, agriculture and trade etc. Governments may produce multiple policy documents on fisheries development targeting different sub-sectors or thematic areas. For this assessment, policy documents are distinguished from fisheries management plans, which are time-bound strategies relating to the management of a specific fishery. These are assessed separately.

usually included for countries if they exist.

While there are sporadic examples of fisheries policy documents for São Tomé and Príncipe, as shown above, this assessment considers policy documents to be ‘not produced’, as there is

insufficient evidence showing that such documents have actually been compiled by national authorities of São Tomé and Príncipe (although there is some uncertainty over this issue).

1-C | FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLANS ¹¹

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(The latest fisheries management plans are published)</i>	Easy to find?
Comprehensive list of fisheries management plans	Not produced		
Not produced			

Available online?

No fisheries management plans for any of its commercially important fisheries are published online, nor did this assessment find any evidence whether such plans have actually been

compiled by the national authorities of São Tomé and Príncipe.

For this assessment, it is assumed that such information has not yet been produced.

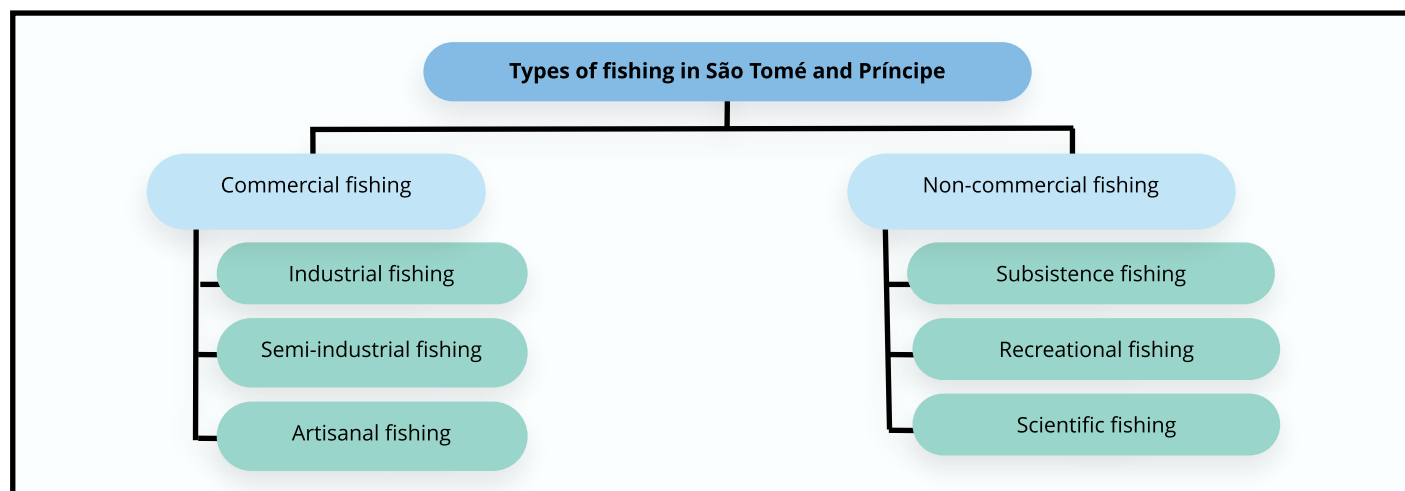
¹¹ Fisheries management plans are usually produced in consultation with fishers and other stakeholders, setting targets and procedures for the management of the fishery over a designated time frame.



2. FISHERIES TENURE ARRANGEMENTS

Fisheries tenure arrangements define how fishing rights are accessed, used, and managed. Tenure in fisheries covers a wide range of scenarios. Fishing rights can be provided on an individual basis (such as through restricted short-term licensing systems), or they can be designated to entire groups (such as when exclusive long-term access to areas of the sea is provided to coastal fishing communities). Official rules on tenure are one of the most critical aspects of sustainable fisheries management because they influence the sector's social, ecological and economic impacts. However, the effectiveness of fisheries tenure arrangements can be undermined by a lack of openness and publicity regarding government rules and procedures. As a result, citizens can suffer from limited insights into how tenures work, who owns fishing rights, and how the benefits and costs of fishing activities are distributed.¹²

São Tomé and Príncipe's legislation distinguishes between several types of fishing, as shown below.



2-A | COMMERCIAL FISHERIES (LARGE-SCALE AND SMALL-SCALE)

Under the FiTI Standard, commercial fishing is categorised either as large-scale or small-scale

fishing. These two sectors are very different in the scale of operation, employment generation,

¹² For more information on transparency of fisheries tenures, please refer to the FiTI 'transparency briefings' (or 'tBriefs' for short): <https://www.fiti.global/tbrief-series>

and degree of capital intensity and investment. In the absence of a universal definition for these sectors, boundaries where one sector ends and the other begins can often be blurry.

Under the São Tomé and Príncipe's General Regulation on Fisheries and Halieutic Resources (Decree 28/2012) commercial fishing activities are conducted either by *large-scale industrial*,

semi-industrial or *artisanal fisheries*.¹³ The approach used by the government to differentiate between these three sub-sectors focuses on the characteristics of vessels, predominantly the technology of the fishing vessel and the number of days that vessels fish at sea before returning to port.

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest tenure rules and procedures are published)	Easy to find?
Fees of access rights and fishing authorisations	No		
Duration of such rights and authorisations	No		
Transferability of such rights and authorisations	No		
Divisibility of such rights and authorisations	No		
Authorities/persons that are legally entitled to issue such rights and authorisations	No		
Mandatory administrative procedures required to determine their issue	No		
Conditions relating to fishing effort	No		
Conditions relating to ecosystem impact	No		
Conditions relating to landings	No		
Conditions relating to transshipping	No		
Conditions relating to catch reporting	No		
Procedures and rules for authorising a São Tomé and Príncipe-flagged vessel to fish in a third country or on the High Seas	Not produced		

¹³ For more information, please refer to chapter 5 and 6 of this report.

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest tenure rules and procedures are published)	Easy to find?
Provisions for formal mechanisms of external oversight and public consultations of fisheries tenure decisions	Not produced		
No			

Available online?

For this assessment, all information on tenure arrangements for commercial fisheries is considered as not available online. This is because the relevant legislation that describes these tenure arrangements, primarily Decree 28/2012, was not located on a government website but through non-government websites (as stated in section 1-A of this report).

The fact that such important information cannot be found on official government websites is critical for several aspects. First, stakeholders less familiar with the fisheries sector – such as the media or parliamentarians – might not even be aware of the existence of this information, and therefore not utilise external search engines. Also, it is uncertain whether rules for fisheries tenure have been changed since Decree 28/2012 was passed.

The following analysis of rules for tenure arrangements for São Tomé and Príncipe's commercial fisheries has therefore no

impact on the transparency assessment score, but is for information purposes only.¹⁴

As per the Decree 28/2012, all commercial fishing activities require a *license*. License are issued for not more than 1 year before they are renewed, and licenses are not eligible to be transferred between vessels. A formular is provided for calculating the fees for fishing licenses in the annex to Decree 28/2012, although it was not possible to locate information on whether this formular has been changed. This is possible as government rules on fees for commercial fisheries are frequently revised, and it is unusual to find that rules have remained the same for a decade.

The country operates an *exclusive zone* for artisanal fishing, which is the area of ocean 12 nautical miles from the coast. Industrial and semi-industrial fishing vessels are prohibited from fishing in this area.

¹⁴ This analysis is based on the copy of Decree 28/2012 that was located on the website of the 'LEGIS-PALOP' project.

São Tomé and Príncipe's law explicitly states that there are no restrictions on *catch limits* for any form of commercial fishing, although such limits can be introduced by the government.

The decree on the general rules for fishing establish fishing activities that are prohibited, including certain forms of fishing gear. In addition, subsequent laws prohibit certain *by-catch* in commercial fisheries, including sea turtles, but these laws were not located for this assessment. That is why the assessment scored 'partially' for information on ecosystem impact.

It is described in third party documents that the rules applicable for *catch reporting* are set out in the Decree 30/2009.¹⁵ However a copy of this legislation could not be located for this assessment. There is also no information

regarding the *transshipment* of catches at sea.

There are no provisions set out in laws accessed for this report that describe any form of *civil society oversight of fishing authorisations*.

However, Decree 41/2013, which covers transparency of information on the authorisation of industrial fishing licenses, includes the provision for bi-annual reports on fishing license authorisations to be provided to parliament.¹⁶ It was not possible to locate the text of this law.

Although there is some evidence that *São Tomé and Príncipe flagged vessels operate in third country's waters*, it was not possible to find any information on the rules and procedures that are followed in authorising such vessels.

2-B | COASTAL SUBSISTENCE FISHING

Under the São Tomé and Príncipe Decree 28/2012, subsistence fisheries are

non-commercial fisheries and are carried out for domestic consumption and are not for profit.

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(The latest tenure rules and procedures are published)</i>	Easy to find?
Fees of access rights and fishing authorisations	No		
Duration of such rights and authorisations	No		

¹⁵ Caillart, B. et al., 2017. Évaluation rétrospective et prospective du protocole à l'accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche durable entre l'Union européenne et São Tomé-et-Príncipe. European Commission.

¹⁶ A description of the law is provided in: Caillart, B. et al., 2017. Évaluation rétrospective et prospective du protocole à l'accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche durable entre l'Union européenne et São Tomé-et-Príncipe. European Commission.

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest tenure rules and procedures are published)	Easy to find?
Authorities/persons that are legally entitled to issue such rights and authorisations	Not applicable		
Mandatory administrative procedures required to determine their issue	Not applicable		
Conditions relating to fishing effort	Not applicable		
Conditions relating to ecosystem impact	Not applicable		
Conditions relating to landings (including the sale of fish)	Not applicable		
Conditions relating to catch reporting	Not applicable		
Provisions for formal mechanisms of external oversight and public consultations of fisheries tenure decisions	Not produced		
No			

Available online?

Similar to the assessment of tenure arrangements for commercial fisheries, information for tenure arrangements on coastal subsistence fishing must also be considered as not available online, as the relevant legislation – primarily Decree 28/2012 – cannot be located on a government website.

The following analysis of rules for tenure arrangements for São Tomé and Príncipe's subsistence fishing has therefore no impact on the transparency assessment score, but is for information purposes only.

Article 25 of Decree 25/2012 describes that subsistence fishing does *not require a license* and therefore is an activity that *can be conducted by any citizen*.

There are also no obligations for *reporting catches* to public authorities and it appears there are no restrictions imposed on the *quantity of fish that can be harvested*, as long as it is used for direct consumption and not for sale.

Due to the *lack of regulations* on subsistence fishing, the majority of conditions relating to its

management are considered 'not applicable' to this assessment.

Furthermore, while it is assumed that the government does provide opportunities for public consultation on the management of

subsistence fishing, no evidence was found of formal mechanisms of external oversight and public consultations and therefore, this assessment considers such information as 'not produced'.

2-C | SCIENTIFIC AND EXPLORATORY FISHING

Under the São Tomé and Príncipe Decree 28/2012 scientific research fisheries are required

to gain obtain government authorisations.

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(The latest tenure rules and procedures are published)</i>	Easy to find?
Fees of access rights and fishing authorisations	No		
Duration of such rights and authorisations	No		
Authorities/persons that are legally entitled to issue such rights and authorisations	No		
Mandatory administrative procedures required to determine their issue	No		
Conditions relating to fishing effort	No		
Conditions relating to ecosystem impact	No		
Conditions relating to landings (including the sale of fish)	No		
Conditions relating to catch reporting	No		
Provisions for formal mechanisms of external oversight and public consultations of fisheries tenure decisions	Not produced		
No			

Available online?

Similar to the previous assessments of tenure arrangements, information for tenure arrangements on scientific and exploratory fishing must also be considered as not available online, as the relevant legislation – primarily Decree 28/2012 – cannot be located on a government website.

The following analysis of rules for tenure arrangements for São Tomé and Príncipe's scientific and exploratory fishing has therefore no impact on the transparency assessment score, but is for information purposes only.

The decision to grant a license for scientific fishing resides with the Minister in charge of

fisheries, as established in the 2001 fisheries law. However, it was not possible to locate any further information on the conditions imposed on scientific or exploratory fishing, including the fees applicable. The assessment considers that such rules exist in the country, and are therefore not published by the government.

Furthermore, while it is assumed that the government does provide opportunities for public consultation on the management of subsistence fishing, no evidence was found of formal mechanisms of external oversight and public consultations and therefore, this assessment considers such information as 'not produced'.

2-D | SPORT FISHING

According to the Fisheries Decree 28/2012 (Article 25) sport fishing is considered a category of recreational fishing. However, those sports

fishing activities that are undertaken for commercial purposes are required to purchase a fishing license.

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest tenure rules and procedures are published)	Easy to find?
Fees of access rights and fishing authorisations	No		
Duration of such rights and authorisations	No		
Authorities/persons that are legally entitled to issue such rights and authorisations	No		

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest tenure rules and procedures are published)	Easy to find?
Mandatory administrative procedures required to determine their issue	No		
Conditions relating to fishing effort	No		
Conditions relating to ecosystem impact	No		
Conditions relating to landings, including the sale of fish	No		
Conditions relating to catch reporting	No		
Provisions for formal mechanisms of external oversight and public consultations of fisheries tenure decisions	Not produced		
No			

Available online?

Similar to the previous assessments of tenure arrangements, information for tenure arrangements on commercial sport fishing must also be considered as not available online, as the relevant legislation – primarily Decree 28/2012 – cannot be located on a government website.

The following analysis of rules for tenure arrangements for São Tomé and Príncipe's commercial sport fishing has therefore no impact on the transparency assessment score, but is for information purposes only.

Although commercial sports fishing requires the purchasing of a license, it was not possible to

locate any information on what the cost of this license is. It is evident from Decree 28/2012 that licenses for sports fishing are granted by the Ministry responsible for fisheries, but there is no further information on the rules that accompany such licenses. The assessment considers that such rules exist in the country and are therefore not published by the government.

Furthermore, while it is assumed that the government does provide opportunities for public consultation on the management of subsistence fishing, no evidence was found of formal mechanisms of external oversight and

public consultations and therefore, this assessment considers such information as ‘not produced’.



3. FOREIGN FISHING ACCESS AGREEMENTS

A foreign fishing access agreement refers to a contractual arrangement that is entered into between a coastal state and a foreign party¹⁷ that allows the foreign party's fishing vessels to operate in the coastal state's marine jurisdictional waters.¹⁸ These agreements provide a compensation for the coastal state, such as monetary transfers, commitments for investments and services, or reciprocal access to overseas fishing grounds for the country's national fishing fleet. A lack of transparency surrounding foreign fishing access agreements has been a persistent concern in international debates. Governments may not publicise whether foreign fishing access agreements are in active use, and the contracts of these agreements can be withheld as confidential information.

3-A | FOREIGN-FLAGGED VESSELS FISHING IN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE'S WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(Agreements that came into force within the last 3 years are published)</i>	Easy to find?
Signed contracts allowing foreign-flagged vessels to fish in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters	No		
Related documents, such as Memorandum of Understandings or amendments (if applicable)	No		
No			

Available online?

São Tomé and Príncipe has fishing agreements with foreign-flagged vessels, but these agreements

are not published online by national authorities.
This includes a Sustainable Fishing Partnership

¹⁷ Agreements can be signed between governments, between a coastal state and a union of foreign governments (such as the European Union), or between coastal states and private corporations, or associations of private companies.

¹⁸ Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone, in the following referred to as 'São Tomé and Príncipe's waters'.

Agreement (SFPA) with the European Union for purse seine and long-line vessels targeting tuna,¹⁹ and a private agreement with the 'Association des Grands Thoniers Congolais' (AGAC). Historical records describe a bi-lateral agreement between São Tomé and Príncipe and Japanese long line vessels, but this agreement has expired and not

been renewed.

In June 2017, it was reported that São Tomé and Príncipe signed a five-year agreement with the Chinese government that included granting fishing licenses to Chinese flagged vessels. However, it appears that ultimately, no such agreement has been signed.

3-B | SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE-FLAGGED VESSELS FISHING IN FOREIGN WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Agreements that came into force within the last 3 years are published)	Easy to find?
Signed contracts allowing São Tomé and Príncipe-flagged vessels to fish in third country waters	Not applicable		
Related documents, such as Memorandum of Understandings or amendments (if applicable)	Not applicable		
Not applicable			

Available online?

It is reported that [São Tomé and Príncipe fishing vessels do fish outside of the country's EEZ](#), but this is restricted to a small number of semi-industrial fishing vessels. Their fishing activities are considered mostly focused on waters of adjacent West African countries,

including Gabon. *However, there is no government information that describes these fishing activities and confirms whether there is a fishing agreement signed between São Tomé and Príncipe and other countries.* It is assumed for this assessment that no such bi-lateral

¹⁹ Information on the EU's SFPA can be found on the website of the European Commission.

agreements exist and that such vessels apply directly for licenses with foreign governments. Furthermore, no vessels registered to São Tomé

and Príncipe appear on the vessel list of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT).



4. THE STATE OF THE FISHERIES RESOURCES

Concern is mounting over decreasing marine biodiversity due to human activities, such as overfishing, climate change, habitat destruction and pollution. National authorities have the duty to collate and publish information on the state of marine fish populations in their waters. This is particularly important for fish targeted by commercial fisheries, given their overfishing can put unsustainable pressure on stocks whose continued existence is essential for national development and food security. Transparency of government information regarding the status of fish stocks, including explanations on changes over time, is a critical feature of responsible fisheries management. Such information should be presented in an accessible way that supports wider public debate, rather than only published in technical scientific reports that are unlikely to be meaningful to the layperson.

4-A | NATIONAL REPORTS ON THE STATE OF MARINE FISH POPULATIONS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
National reports on US marine fish population, including at least the top 5 commercial fish species	Not produced		
Information on trends in the state of stocks and explanations on the reasons for change	Not produced		
Not produced			

Available online?

The government of São Tomé and Príncipe does not produce a singular report at regular

intervals that summarises information on the state of fish populations.²⁰

²⁰ Such reports are intended to summarise the state of marine fish populations, instead of scientific information or academic reports on individual fish species. Several countries produce such documents as standalone reports or as a section of their annual report.

4-B | SCIENTIFIC STOCK ASSESSMENTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Scientific stock assessments	Not produced		
Information on the methods and data used to assess fish stocks			
Information on ongoing or planned efforts to update and expand fish stock assessments			
	Not produced		

Available online?

There is no evidence that the government of São Tomé and Príncipe undertakes stock assessments of commercial fish species. It is therefore assumed that this information is 'not produced', rather than collated and not published.

Although it appears that national authorities collate some catch information of fish species, including through donor funded projects, it does not seem that the government has the capacity to undertake analysis on fish populations and on the status of fish stocks, including information on trends in fish stocks. Limited

independent research has been undertaken recently on the status of fish populations in coastal areas targeted by artisanal fishers, although this does not seem to be integrated into government fisheries management.²¹

Analysis on highly migratory fish stocks that exist in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters are produced and published by ICCAT, of which São Tomé and Príncipe is a member. However, no reports of the scientific studies on migratory fish stocks produced by ICCAT are published by the São Tomé and Príncipe authorities on their own websites.

²¹ Maia, H. 'Spatial patterns and drivers of fish and benthic reef communities at São Tomé Island, Tropical Eastern Atlantic' Marine Ecology, February 2018.



5: LARGE-SCALE FISHERIES

Large-scale commercial fishing often represents the most important sector of marine fisheries in terms of catches, landings, and government revenues. It typically involves the use of large high-capacity boats, equipped with on-board facilities for freezing and processing seafood while at sea. These vessels often remain at sea for long periods of time and carry large crews for catching and processing fish on board. A number of important issues affecting large-scale fisheries – ranging from levels of bycatch and discards to the fair distribution of revenues – make the public availability of information on the sector a crucial element of increasing transparency in fisheries management.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, large-scale fishing is also commonly referred to as 'industrial' fishing.

Large-scale fishing vessels are distinguished from both semi-industrial and artisanal.

5-A | VESSELS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 1 year)	Easy to find?
Registry of São Tomé and Príncipe- and foreign-flagged vessels authorised to fish in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters	No		
Name of the vessel			
Legal owner of the vessel, including their address and nationality			
Registered port of the vessel			
Flag State of the vessel			
Unique identification number(s) of the vessel			
Type of vessel, according to fishing gear or fishing method			

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 1 year)	Easy to find?
Physical characteristics of the vessel, including length, beam, tonnage and engine power			
Name of the vessel's agent			
Access agreement under which the foreign-flagged vessel is authorised to fish			
Type of fishing authorisation held by the vessel			
Quantity and names of target species, permissible bycatch and discards that the vessel is authorised to fish, if specified in the vessel's fishing authorisation			
Duration of the fishing authorisation, indicating start and end date			
Rights holder for whom the vessel is fishing, including the name and nationality of the rights holder			
Country and/or regions of the High Seas where the nationally-flagged vessel is authorised to fish			
No			

Available online?

The government of São Tomé and Príncipe does not publish a registry of large-scale fishing vessels. This is contrary to the requirement stated in Decree 41/2013, mandating that information on licensed industrial vessels is

published by the relevant Ministry.

No vessels registered to São Tomé and Príncipe appear on the vessel list of the ICCAT.

5-B | PAYMENTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Annual total amount of payments for fishing from large-scale vessels	No		
Name of the natural person or legal entity that made the payment			
Name of the national authority who received the payment			
Date on which payment was received by the national authority			
Purpose of the payment			
No			

Available online?

There is no information published by the government of São Tomé and Príncipe on the revenues received from licensing industrial

fisheries. However, such information also falls under Decree 41/2013 and thus, must be published in the public domain.

5-C | CATCHES WITHIN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE'S WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded retained catches	No		
Disaggregated by species or species groups			

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessels			
	No		

Available online?

There is no information published online by the government of São Tomé and Príncipe on the catches made by industrial fishing vessels. Certain catch information is published in a [2019 study of the seafood sector](#) in São Tomé and Príncipe by the FAO. Furthermore, catch data reported by vessels operating under the EU's SFPAs is available in reports published by the European Commission. These reports also confirm that despite the obligation of other foreign flagged vessels to report catch data to

MAPDR as per their license agreement, this data has not been made available to the EU, despite it being requested.²² It is unclear whether the MAPDR receives such catch reports and chooses to not publish them, or whether it does not receive catch reports from vessel owners (therefore being information that is 'not produced'). For this assessment it is assumed that the government does receive catch data from authorised vessels.

5-D | CATCHES OUTSIDE SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE'S WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded retained catches by nationally-flagged vessels	Not applicable		

²² Caillart, B. et al., 2017. Évaluation rétrospective et prospective du protocole à l'accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche durable entre l'Union européenne et São Tomé-et-Príncipe. European Commission.

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type			
Disaggregated by fishing area (i.e. High Seas and third country)			
Not applicable			

Available online?

There is no evidence that São Tomé and Príncipe has nationally-flagged industrial vessels operating in third country waters. The São Tomé and Príncipe's flagged vessels that may be fishing in third country waters are thought to be

classified as semi-industrial small-scale, and therefore not covered in this section of the assessment. There is no public data on the catches of these vessels.

5-E | LANDINGS IN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE'S PORTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded landings in São Tomé and Príncipe's ports of fish caught in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters	Not applicable		
Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisation or gear type			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessels			
Not applicable			

Available online?

Industrial fishing vessels do not land their catches in São Tomé and Príncipe, due to the lack of port infrastructure and domestic

processing facilities. The assessment therefore scores this aspect as not applicable.

5-F | TRANSSHIPMENTS AND LANDINGS IN FOREIGN PORTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded transshipments at sea or landings in foreign ports of fish caught in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters	No		
Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisation or gear type			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessel			
	No		

Available online?

Although no fish caught in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters by commercial fishing vessels is landed in national ports, the government also does not provide any information on where this fish is landed, as well as information on the extent to which fishing vessels operating in the

country are known to tranship catches at sea. It is possible that the government does not collate this information in a systematic way, although for this assessment it is assumed that the government does have access to this information.

5-G | DISCARDS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual discards from large-scale vessels authorised to fish in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters	No		
Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisation or gear types			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessels			
	No		

Available online?

Although large-scale fishing vessels operating in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters will discard fish catches, there is no public information published by the government, including estimates, on the quantities of this. It is possible that the government does not collate this information in a systematic way, although it is

assumed that the government does have access to information that would allow for estimates. Indeed, some estimates can be found in reports provided by third parties. For this reason the assessment considers the information to be not published, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).

5-H | FISHING EFFORT

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Total annual recorded fishing effort	No		
Disaggregated by fishery or gear types			

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessels			
	No		

Available online?

There is no public information on fishing effort by industrial fishing vessels in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters, such as the total number of days fished by authorised vessels. For this assessment it is assumed that the government

does have access to information that would allow for estimates and therefore, such information is considered as not being published, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).



6. SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

In many countries, commercial small-scale fisheries – also commonly referred to as artisanal fisheries – account for the vast majority of people engaged in fishing activities, whether they be full-time, part-time or seasonal. It is widely recognised that this sector can play a vital role in national food security, the economic well-being of large numbers of people, as well as the culture of coastal communities. However, official information on the small-scale sector is often limited and inadequate public resources are allocated to collating this information. This represents a potential barrier to responsible fisheries management. It may also marginalise small-scale fisheries in national debates and policy implementation.²³

As the FiTI Standard only differentiates between commercial large-scale and commercial small-scale fisheries, both the semi-industrial and artisanal fishing sub-sectors of São Tomé

and Príncipe's are assessed together under this transparency theme of 'small-scale fisheries'. Non-commercial subsistence and recreational fisheries are not considered here.

6-A | VESSELS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Total number of commercial small-scale fishing vessels	No		
Disaggregated by categories of fishing or gear types			
No			

²³ More information about the importance of transparency for small-scale fisheries can be found in our 6th transparency briefing (or 'tbrief', for short) here: <https://www.fiti.global/tbrief-series>.

Available online?

Information on semi-industrial and artisanal fishing is not found online on government websites or online reports.

However, it is reported that surveys on coastal fisheries are produced by the National Institute for Statistics. Multiple sources describe that at least three surveys have been undertaken since 2007, with the most recent being done in 2019.²⁴ According to a report commissioned by the World Bank, the Department of Fisheries has been supported in developing catch data by a

FAO project, that began in 2015.²⁵ However, documentation on these surveys cannot be found on any government websites and it was not possible to locate them on other websites. It appears there are no electronic copies that are made freely available.

Therefore, as there is evidence that the government collates data on small-scale fisheries, information is considered not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).

6-B | LICENSES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Total number of licenses issued to commercial small-scale fishing vessels	No		
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations			
No			

²⁴ See for example, Serkovic, M., and Million J. 'Country economic memorandum for Sao Tome and Principe', Background notes produced for the World Bank, available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32134/139093.pdf?sequence=4>

²⁵ Ibid. The text describes: In 2015, thanks to an FAO project and after 10 years of interruption, fisheries data collection resumed in São Tomé and Príncipe. The current system relies on a network of 12 investigators spread over a dozen landing sites identified as the most important in terms of artisanal fleet and quantities landed. The catch data collected is coupled to frame survey data (census of the number of vessels) undertaken in 2014". There is, however, no documentation available on this project, including on the website of the FAO.

Available online?

Information on licenses issued to semi-industrial and artisanal fishing vessels is not found online on government websites or online reports, despite evidence that such information is

available (see above, section 6-A). Therefore, such information is considered not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).

6-C | FISHERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Total number of small-scale fishers	No		
Disaggregated by gender information			
Disaggregated by type of occupation ²⁶			
No			

Available online?

Information on the number of semi-industrial and artisanal fishers is not found online on government websites or online reports, despite evidence that such information is available (see

above, section 6-A). Therefore, such information is considered not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).

²⁶ Proportion of full-time work, seasonal or part-time fishing.

6-D | PAYMENTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data comprises previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Total amount of payments made from commercial small-scale fisheries	No		
Disaggregated by payments for fishing authorisations, catches and landings			
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations or gear types			
Disaggregated by recipient of payments			
	No		

Available online?

Information on payments from São Tomé and Príncipe's semi-industrial and artisanal fisheries is not found online on government websites or online reports, despite evidence that such

information is available (see above, section 6-A). Therefore, such information is considered not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).

6-E | CATCHES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Total quantity of catches made by the small-scale sector	No		
Disaggregated by species			

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations and gear types			
No			

Available online?

Information on catches made by São Tomé and Príncipe's semi-industrial and artisanal fisheries is not found online on government websites or online reports, despite evidence that such

information is available (see above, section 6-A). Therefore, such information is considered not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).

6-F | DISCARDS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Total volumes of discards by the small-scale sector	No		
Disaggregated by species			
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations and gear types			
No			

Available online?

Information on discards by São Tomé and Príncipe's semi-industrial and artisanal fisheries is not found online on government websites or online reports, despite evidence that such

information is available (see above, section 6-A). Therefore, such information is considered not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).



7. POST-HARVEST SECTOR AND FISH TRADE

Fish is the most traded agricultural product in the world. The commerce it generates provides important revenues and foreign exchange. The fisheries post-harvest sector – which includes the processing and selling of fish – often accounts for the majority of jobs created across the industry, and, in many countries, the sector represents an important source of income for women. The inflow and outflow of fish from a country also has substantial implications on national food availability. Widespread public access to information is therefore critical for ensuring properly informed national debates around the post-harvest sector's management and the resulting social, economic and food security implications.

7-A | IMPORTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 2 years)	Easy to find?
Total quantity of imports of fish and fish products	No		
Disaggregated by species and fish products			
Disaggregated by country of origin			
No			

Available online?

Trade data is compiled by the [National Institute for Statistics \(INE\)](#), and summary reports are available online on INE's website.

However, trade data provided by the INE is very general. In the annual report of 2017, fish is included in the imports of food products which

also includes other animal meat. It is therefore not possible to distinguish fish imports as a stand-alone product through government publications. There is also no further breakdown provided on species of fish imported.

Data on fish trade can be found on other

websites, including the [FAO's GLOBEFISH database](#) and country profiles. This includes import data in São Tomé and Príncipe for 10 categories of species of fish. The data presented by the FAO indicates that more detailed

statistics are compiled by the government in São Tomé and Príncipe.²⁷ For this reason the assessment considers that government information is not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).

7-B | EXPORTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 2 years)	Easy to find?
Total quantity of exports of fish and fish products	Partially	No	Yes
Disaggregated by species and fish products	No		
Disaggregated by country of destination	No		
	To a limited extent	No	To a full extent

Available online?

As stated above (7-A | Import), trade data provided by the INE is of a very general level. Export data is provided for fish and molluscs, but with no further disaggregation according to species/products.

Export data published by FAO's GLOBEFISH is of a very general nature as well and includes only a

total figure. Other online sources of information provide contrasting data to that which is presented by the FAO, but also includes information on the destination country for exports. It is however uncertain what the source of this information is.²⁸

²⁷ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb5804en/cb5804en.pdf> as well as <https://www.fao.org/3/ca5053pt/CA5053PT.pdf>.

²⁸ See for example: <https://trendeconomy.com/data/h2/SaoTomeAndPrincipe/0302>

Up to date?

Summary reports of exports are made available on the website of the INE. However, there are gaps in information. The latest annual reports are only available for 2017. Therefore 2018, 2019 and 2020 are not included in the list of

reports on the website of INE. There are also two monthly reports for 2021, being for January and February, but these do not include fisheries specific data. Information is therefore considered as not up to date.

Easy to find?

Summary reports of exports are easy to find on the website of the INE.

7-C | EMPLOYMENT IN COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Total number of people employed in commercial fisheries sectors	No		
Disaggregated by gender			
Disaggregated by sub-sectors			
No			

Available online?

Government statistics on employment are not available on any government website. The INE has the responsibility of undertaking a national census, but there are no census reports listed

on its website (although there is a sub-category for census reports, but no reports have been uploaded). Third party reports indicate that the last census may have been undertaken in

2012.²⁹ However, information indicates that the government uses categories for employment that do not disaggregate for fisheries, but rather includes employment in fisheries in combination with other agricultural sectors.

Other reports suggest that the survey of the fisheries sector undertaken by the Department of Fisheries in 2014/15 included information on employment in the sector, disaggregated by gender and age groups. However, it is not possible to locate the results of this survey on government websites or any other website. The World Bank, which apparently had access to the report, described in a paper that '4.6 percent of

all employed population work on fisheries, with 89 percent of them being male. Artisanal fisheries directly employ over 5,000 people: fishers, and women selling and processing fish'.³⁰

In addition to the information compiled by the INE, this assessment also considered information that is published by the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity, Family and Vocational Training (MTSFFP). However, MTSFFP do not have a website and it provides news updates only through a Facebook page. No information could be found through the MTSFFP on fisheries employment.

7-D | EMPLOYMENT IN INFORMAL FISHERIES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 3 years)	Easy to find?
Total number of people employed in informal fisheries sectors	No		
Disaggregated by gender			
Disaggregated by sub-sectors			
No			

²⁹ For example, a report on youth employment produced by African Economic Outlook: https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Sao_Tome_Principe_Youth_Unemployment_Briefing.pdf

³⁰ Serkovic, M., and Million J. "Country economic memorandum for Sao Tome and Principe", Background notes produced for the World Bank, available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32134/139093.pdf?sequence=4>

Available online?

It is likely that fisheries in São Tomé and Príncipe includes people working in the informal sector, including those working in fish trade that are not registered with the government or have a formal contract of employment. It is also likely that an insight into the scale of the informal sector is provided by government surveys, but nothing can be found in government websites that

describes this.

As it is assumed that government surveys collate information that would provide information on the scale and characteristics of the informal fisheries sector, this assessment considers information to be not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. not collected).



8. FISHERIES LAW ENFORCEMENT

There has been growing international awareness of the scale and impacts of non-compliance with national laws and regulations, such as those associated with ‘illegal, unreported and unregulated’ (IUU) fishing. Increasing attention is focusing on how public authorities of coastal states respond to this challenge, including on their ability to enforce compliance and administer effective and fair criminal justice. However, reporting on these efforts is often neglected, undermining informed public debates on how the challenges arising from these illicit activities can be most effectively addressed.

8-A | ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 2 years)	Easy to find?
National activities and strategies used for ensuring compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector with national legislation	No		
Financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with national legislation	No		
Total numbers of inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in ports	No		
No			

Available online?

There is no government information on national activities or strategies for ensuring compliance in the fisheries sector published online. São

Tomé and Príncipe has not produced a National Action Plan for the eradication of IUU fishing, as recommended by the FAO.

Third party reports indicate limited capacity in the country for undertaking inspections and at sea monitoring of large-scale fishing vessels, although the law enforcement capacity in São Tomé and Príncipe is difficult to establish.³¹ As the government conducts activities for ensuring

compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector with national legislation, this assessment considers information to be not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. compiled).

8-B | SANCTIONS FOR MAJOR OFFENCES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data covers the last 5 years)	Easy to find?
Record of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector	No		
Name of the company or vessel owner			
Nature of the offence			
Penalty imposed			
	No		

Available online?

There is no government information on penalties and sanctions for major offenses in the fisheries sector published online. However, there is evidence that São Tomé and Príncipe have arrested fishing vessels for illegal fishing activities. This includes [arrests of vessels for illegal fishing of sharks in 2018](#), which was part

of a joint initiative between Gabon and the non-governmental organisation Sea Shepard.

Therefore, this assessment considers information to be not available online, as opposed to 'not produced' (e.g. compiled).

³¹ Caillart, B. et al., 2017. Évaluation rétrospective et prospective du protocole à l'accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche durable entre l'Union européenne et São Tomé-et-Príncipe. European Commission.



9. LABOUR STANDARDS

Fisheries provide jobs and income for large numbers of people, both in the harvest and post-harvest sectors. However, it is widely recognised that employment in fisheries is among the most arduous and dangerous in the world. Public authorities have a duty to ensure they apply high labour standards to all parts of their fisheries sector and that their efforts to enforce these standards are well documented. This is critical information for ensuring the rights of those working in the sector are respected.

The Ministry of Labour, Solidarity, Family and Vocational Training is the government body responsible for monitoring and enforcing laws on labour standards in São Tomé and Príncipe, including the country's fisheries sector.

São Tomé and Príncipe is [a member of the International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) since

1982. To date, there are several international instruments of the ILO directly applicable to the fishing sector that São Tomé and Príncipe has not yet signed, acceded to and/or ratified, such as the 'Seafarers' Welfare Convention, 1987 (No. 163)' or the 'Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)'.

9-A | ENFORCEMENT OF LABOUR STANDARDS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(New laws that came into force within the last 5 years are published)</i>	Easy to find?
National strategies and activities for ensuring compliance with labour standards in the fisheries sector	Not produced		
Financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with labour standards	No		
No			

Available online?

This assessment found no evidence for national strategies to enforce labour standards in the fisheries sector of São Tomé and Príncipe. This information is therefore considered as 'not produced'.

There is no documentation published online regarding the financial and human resources

deployed by the government to ensure compliance with labour standards. For this assessment, it is assumed that the government does provide resources for this activity, but information on these efforts is not published online.

9-B | SANCTIONS FOR LABOUR STANDARD OFFENCES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(Published data is not older than 2 years)</i>	Easy to find?
Total number of labour standard offences in the fisheries sector that have been resolved by national authorities	No		
No			

Available online?

There is no information published online by national authorities about labour standard offences in São Tomé and Príncipe's fisheries sector. It is therefore unclear whether such offences do or do not occur. This assessment

considers that such information exists - that some cases relating to labour standard offences have been dealt with by national authorities - but is not published online.



10. FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

The extent and purpose of government subsidies offered to a country's fisheries sector has long been one of the most controversial themes in international debates on responsible fisheries management. Perhaps more than any other single factor, subsidies are seen as the source of a range of problems, such as overfishing, illegal fishing and unfair benefit sharing.³²

10-A | GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL TRANSFERS OR SUBSIDIES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Previous calendar year)	Easy to find?
Total value of financial transfers or subsidies to the fisheries sector	No		
Disaggregated by type/purpose			
Disaggregated by recipient			
Average annual value of any fuel subsidies per unit of fuel (in nominal and percentage terms)			
	No		

Available online?

This assessment was unable to find any government reports indicating the total value of subsidies to the fisheries sector in São Tomé

and Príncipe. However, evidence suggests that subsidies are provided. Reports indicate that fishers have been provided with government

³² More information regarding transparency for fisheries subsidies can be found in our 4th transparency briefing (or 'tbrief', for short) here: <https://www.fiti.global/tbrief-series>

support to acquire fishing gear and equipment.³³ In addition, the government has taken over the running of [a national plan for improving food security among children at school](#), previously run by the World Food Programme. This purchases fish for artisanal fisheries for school meals. However, there is

very little documentation on this project, including government expenditures.

This assessment considers that information regarding direct or indirect financial transfers or subsidies exists but is not published online.

³³ Nuno, A. Metcalfe, K. Godley, B.J. & Broderick, A.C. (2015). Marine Conservation Priorities São Tomé and Príncipe Scoping Report. University of Exeter. https://www.ananuno.net/uploads/2/5/6/2/25623460/marine_scoping_visit_report_uoe_final_1_.pdf



11. OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Official development assistance (ODA) can represent an important source of funds to support the development of a country's fisheries sector. However, it is common knowledge that ODA is not always delivered in the most effective manner. This is exacerbated in situations where public information on the value, purpose and outcomes of public sector development projects remains unpublished. This can also lead to a lack of public participation in decision-making over how ODA should be used.

11-A | ASSISTANCE FOR NATIONAL FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Not older than 2 years)	Easy to find?
List of assistances received for public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation in São Tomé and Príncipe, funded by bilateral, multilateral and private donors	No		
Project value			
Project purpose and outputs			
Project evaluations			
	No		

Available online?

This assessment found no information on the websites of the São Tomé and Príncipe government regarding projects relating to fisheries and/or marine conservation financed by foreign donors.

However, São Tomé and Príncipe is the recipients of multiple projects through ODA. For example, [in 2019 the government of Japan provided São Tomé and Príncipe with a grant of 1.6 million Euros](#) for a fisheries improvement

project. São Tomé and Príncipe is also a recipient of [fisheries projects supported by the Global Environment Facility](#), and it is a country included in the [FISH4ACP project](#), financed by the European Union and Germany. Other projects are also currently underway at São Tomé and Príncipe, such as the World Bank-funded [WACA project](#) and the African Development Bank-funded [PRIASA II project](#).

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) also lists several [projects either in progress or recently completed](#). It is therefore evident by these examples that São Tomé and Príncipe is the recipient of ODA for fisheries, but has not published any information on these public sector projects yet.

11-B | ASSISTANCE FOR FOREIGN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Not older than 2 years)	Easy to find?
List of assistances provided for public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation by São Tomé and Príncipe to foreign countries	Not applicable		
Project value			
Project purpose and outputs			
Project evaluations			
Not applicable			

Available online?

São Tomé and Príncipe does not provide assistance to foreign countries for public sector

projects related to fisheries and marine conservation.



12. BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

Beneficial ownership – that is, the natural person who ultimately owns or controls a business or transaction – is a topic grabbing global attention. This interest also extends to the fisheries sector. A lack of transparency around ownership of fishing companies, vessels or licenses is linked to several important policy debates, including non-compliance with tax laws, evasion of criminal prosecutions for illegal fishing, corruption and conflicts of interests, and also the excessive concentration of ownership in segments of the fisheries sector.³⁴

12-A | LEGAL BASIS FOR BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest legal basis is published online)	Easy to find?
Legal basis for beneficial ownership transparency in São Tomé and Príncipe	Not produced		
Legal definition of beneficial ownership			
Thresholds used to determine when ownership and control is disclosed			
Disclosure exceptions			
Not produced			

Available online?

São Tomé and Príncipe has made a commitment to beneficial ownership transparency as part of accessing funds through the International

Monetary Fund's (IMF) Rapid Credit Facility, as well as for its extractives sector as a member country of the Extractives Industry Transparency

³⁴ More information about the importance of beneficial ownership transparency in fisheries can be found in our 3rd transparency briefing (or 'tbrief', for short) here: <https://www.fiti.global/tbrief-series>

Initiative (EITI). As part of its EITI membership, [the government agreed to a road map in 2017 to develop such legislation according to international best practice](#). However, there is no recent update on whether this roadmap has been implemented.

There is no information whether legislations for beneficial ownership transparency exists. For this assessment, it is assumed that such a legal basis has not been produced and/or finalised yet.

12-B | BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP REGISTRY

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Data confirmed on annual basis)	Easy to find?
Beneficial ownership register	Not produced		
Beneficial owner(s) and their interests			
Declarations of shares or interest held indirectly			
Reasons for not specifying any beneficial owners			
Declaring entity			
Not produced			

Available online?

This assessment found no evidence that the national authorities are collating a centralised beneficial ownership registry in São Tomé and Príncipe.

However, third party information indicates that several activities are currently being carried out. For example, in 2020, the IMF stated in a report that the authorities in São Tomé and Príncipe

are making efforts to strengthen their capacity to collect beneficial owner information, including through technical assistance. However, no further information was provided about such efforts. It is therefore assumed that – even if such efforts are still ongoing – no such registry has been produced yet.

12-C | BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE IN FISHERIES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(New rules/procedures published in last 2 years)</i>	Easy to find?
Rules and procedures for incorporating beneficial ownership in filings by organisations to agencies regulating access to fisheries	Not produced		
Not produced			

Available online?

This assessment found no evidence that the national authorities of São Tomé and Príncipe provide or are working to produce dedicated rules and procedures for incorporating beneficial ownership into filings for procedures of the fisheries sector, such as fishing permits, vessel registrations, etc. It is therefore unclear as

to whether such rules and procedures for the fisheries sector exist at all.

This assessment assumes that no such fisheries-specific rules and procedures for beneficial ownership have yet been produced by national authorities.

TAKING STOCK

Online Transparency of Fisheries
Management Information



Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI)

Highway Complex Building, Providence, Mahe, Seychelles

Email: info@fiti.global

Internet: www.fiti.global

Twitter: [@FisheriesTI](https://twitter.com/FisheriesTI)

Facebook: Fisheries Transparency Initiative