

Where can one find more information on the SSF Guidelines process?

Information can be found on the following FAO website:

<http://www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/guidelines/en>

It can also be found on the following CSO websites:

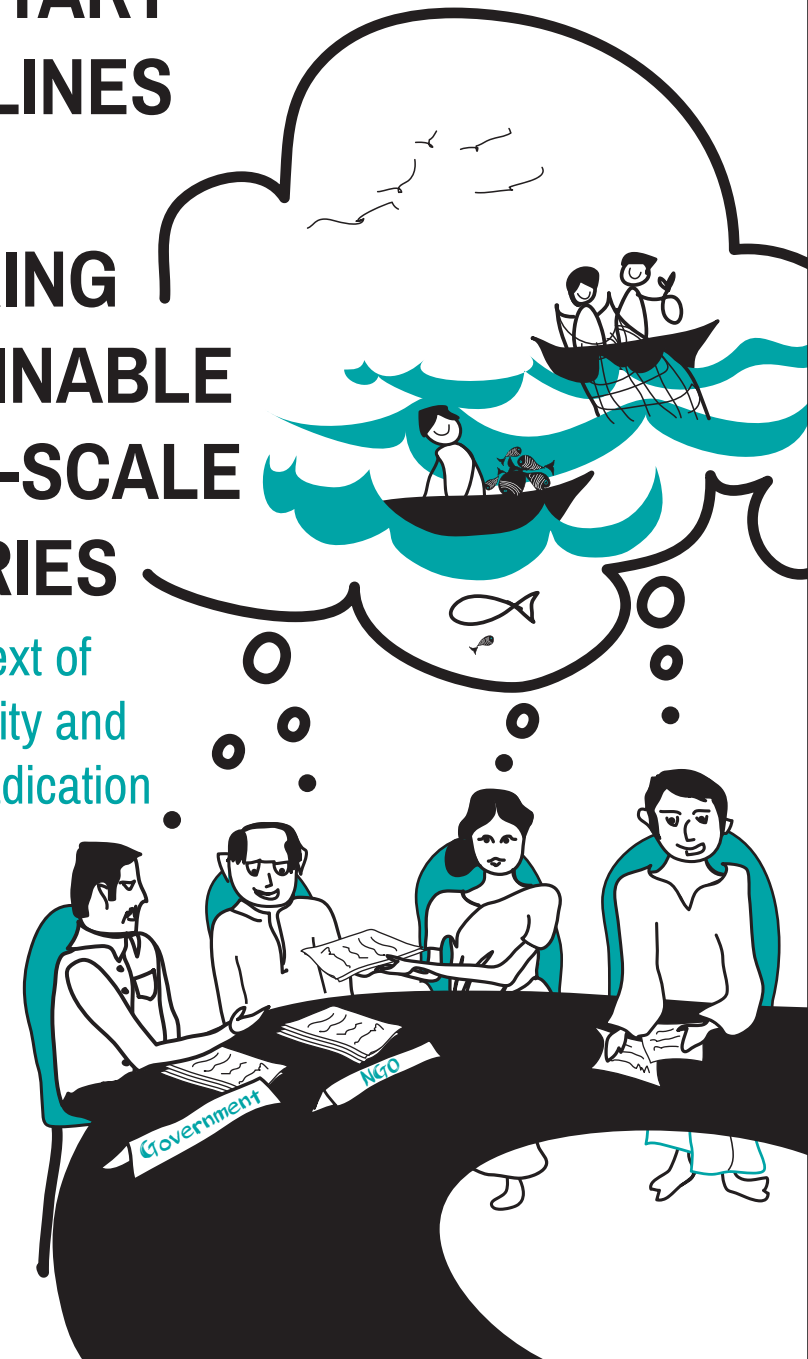
<https://sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/>

<http://igssf.icsf.net/>



DRAFT VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

in the Context of
Food Security and
Poverty Eradication



What are the SSF Guidelines?

The **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations** (FAO) is leading a process to develop *Voluntary Guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication* - as a complement to the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).

The decision to develop the SSF Guidelines was taken by the 29th session of the **Committee on Fisheries** (COFI) of the FAO, in February 2011, following recommendations made by the 2008 Global Conference on Small Scale Fisheries, in Bangkok, Thailand (Bangkok Conference). COFI noted that the importance of small-scale fisheries was often not recognized and due attention was not given to the needs of small-scale fishers and their communities.

By making the importance of small-scale fisheries more widely understood and recognized, and by **promoting a human rights-based approach**, the SSF Guidelines, once adopted by COFI, would enhance the already important role of small-scale fisheries and the contribution they make to global and national efforts towards the **eradication of hunger and poverty**.



How are the SSF Guidelines being developed? Have civil society organizations participated in the process?

The FAO Member States are currently negotiating the SSF Guidelines. Civil society organizations (CSOs, including organizations representing workers in the small scale fisheries sector and NGOs), regional organizations and other stakeholders are participating in these negotiations. While the first technical consultation was held in May 2013, the second session will be held in February 2014.

Prior to the technical consultation, a large number of consultations had been organized by the FAO, by States and other organizations towards developing a draft set of SSF Guidelines for negotiation. CSOs have proactively engaged with this process since the 2008 Bangkok Conference. They have organized twenty national-level workshops spanning Asia, Africa and Latin America, two regional workshops in Africa, as well as consultations among small-scale fishers and fishworkers in the European Union and Canada, involving several hundred people, including men and women fishers and fishworkers in the small scale fisheries sector. Their aspirations and proposals have constructively fed into the process of developing the draft negotiation text of the SSF Guidelines. The CSO platform has

been co-ordinated by the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

Why are the SSF Guidelines of interest to CSOs?

CSOs believe that the Guidelines have the potential of providing a useful tool to create policy spaces for the small-scale fisheries subsector for reversing its marginalization. They have, for long, advocated for the need for such Guidelines to **defend the rights and to protect the legitimate interests** of small-scale fishers and fishworkers. They have pointed out that while small-scale fishers and fishworkers make important contribution to food security and poverty eradication, they face tremendous challenges, including exclusion from decision-making, overfishing by industrial vessels, takeover of their lands and of their rights to fish, competition from conflicting uses of aquatic space, poverty and lack of access to basic services.

When are the SSF Guidelines likely to be adopted and implemented?

The negotiated text of the SSF Guidelines are expected to be presented to the 31st

session of COFI in June 2014 for adoption. Once adopted, it will then be mainly up to States, CSOs and other stakeholders and interested parties to ensure that they are properly implemented.

Given that the SSF Guidelines are voluntary, how can they make a difference to small-scale fisheries once adopted?

The SSF Guidelines, once adopted, will need to be effectively implemented if they are to make a positive difference to small-scale fishers and fishworkers. This has to be a shared responsibility of governments, donors, small-scale fishers and fishworkers and other relevant groups. Small-scale fishers and fishworkers will need to work with their governments to ensure that policies, legislation and programmes are aligned with the proposals contained in the SSF Guidelines. This will require the active involvement of and co-ordination between several government departments and stakeholders not only in fisheries but also in other sectors of consequence to small-scale fishing communities.

