

Briefing

How to implement gender-oriented small-scale fisheries: a review of the FAO-ICSF gender handbook

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Coinciding with the celebration of the International Women's Day, and looking at the upcoming International Year of Artisanal Fisheries in a year from now, CFFA wishes to recall the fundamental place held by women in the fishing sector and the needs for recognition and legal and sanitary security of their activities. To this end, we have developed a summary table of the dedicated Gender Guide for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Small-scale Fisheries, published by FAO and ISCF in 2017. This guide, as shown in our table (see Annex), includes recommendations for concrete actions for decision-makers and civil society organizations.

1. Overview

Following the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (VG-SSF/SSF Guidelines) by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in June 2014, various actors around the globe organized several capacity-building workshops and consultations.¹

The SSF Guidelines call for equal participation of women and men in organizations and in decision-making processes. Policies and legislation must support equality, and both women and men must have access to appropriate technologies and services to carry out their work. The SSF Guidelines advocate a human rights-based approach

¹ FAO, "Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication", Rome, 2014. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4356en.pdf>

and the principles of gender equity and equality are core objectives and guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines. **Chapter 8 on Gender equality** of the Guidelines calls for concerted efforts on the part of all stakeholders to include gender equality as an integral part of all SSF development strategies. Plus, gender considerations are mainstreamed throughout the text.

With the adoption of the Guidelines, **a need was felt to have guidance on how to practically mainstream gender in their implementation**. Under its SSF Umbrella Programme, FAO is therefore conducting work on the application of gender equality principles in small-scale fisheries. The planned work includes, among others, the preparation of gender guidance materials to help in the gender-equitable implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

There came the idea to draft a specific handbook on the implementation of the guidelines specifically dedicated to gender-equitable small-scale fisheries governance and development. A first draft gender guidance document (draft “Gender Manual”) was elaborated by ICSF in support of FAO, consulting several institutions and stakeholders like CFFA and CAOPA. An “*Expert workshop on gender-equitable small-scale fisheries in the context of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines*” was held in November 2016 at FAO in Rome as one of the steps in the development of this guidance document to promote gender-equitable small-scale fisheries in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.²

The workshop discussed gender issues in the SSF Guidelines, and reviewed the draft “Gender Manual”. While the outcomes of the workshop focused on informing the finalization of the Manual, there were also discussions on how FAO and other actors could utilize the Gender Manual in the future. The participants were divided in working groups to study each parts of the draft gender Manual and come up with suggestions for improvements.³ By the end of the workshop, it was agreed that the draft gender manual should be more attractive and condensed, despite the number of cases cited as relevant examples. After submitting the new draft version to the participants, the final version of the Manual was published in June 2017.⁴

This handbook was developed to support gender-equitable small-scale fisheries by enhancing the understanding of their gender dimensions, with a focus on the specific role and conditions of women in the small-scale fisheries sector. It illustrates how to apply the provisions of the SSF Guidelines to promote gender equity and equality in all aspects of the SSF sector, focusing on States responsibilities, since it is primarily intended for use by policy-makers and public institutions, but also for all other

² The workshop was organized with support from the Gender Team of the Economic and Social Development Department as well as from the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). 31 participants representing different stakeholders attended it. CFFA attended the workshop and reported the works in progress and the requests from West African women. The recommendations made by CFFA representative ensured that CAOPA’s women issues were reflected in the draft gender manual. “Towards gender-equitable small-scale fisheries, Proceedings of the ‘Expert workshop on gender-equitable small-scale fisheries in the context of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines’”, Rome, 28–30 November 2016. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6947e.pdf>

³ Each group had to evaluate a chapter of the draft gender manual based on the following guidelines: Scope: Does the chapter address all relevant aspects in relation to the topic? Applicability: Does the chapter provide the appropriate terminology, acceptability and relevance to the target audience? Structure: Is the chapter structured appropriately? Case studies: Are the examples relevant and illustrative of key issues? Recommendations: Is the final guidance practical and relevant for the target audience?

⁴ The final reference of the handbook is the following: FAO. “Towards gender-equitable small-scale fisheries governance and development - A handbook. In support of the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication”, by Nilanjana Biswas. Rome, 2017. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7419e.pdf>

stakeholders, to implement policies and plans that help promote gender equality. It is based on case studies taken from different regions in the world according to the information given during the consultations.

It should be noted that the handbook is to be read by policy makers, CSOs and all other parties interested, by referring to a specific chapter according to their needs.

The handbook is organized into three parts:

Part 1 briefly explains the concepts of gender and gender mainstreaming, followed by a description of women's work and roles in the SSF sector. It provides useful definitions related to gender and how it is important to consider women in fisheries. Indeed, it details the implication of women in fisheries and the issues they face in their activity, especially in small-scale fisheries *"[w]omen's work in the fisheries sector is usually overlooked or under-represented in official statistics. This leads to a vicious cycle where lack of sex-disaggregated data gives rise to gender-blind policy-making, which in turn translates into inadequate funding for the economic sectors that women are concentrated in"* (p. 5).

Part 2 provides guidance related to the thematic areas of Part 2 of the SSF Guidelines: Responsible fisheries and sustainable development.

Part 3 provides guidance related to Part 3 of the SSF Guidelines: Ensuring an enabling environment and supporting implementation.

In these 2 parts, the Handbook builds upon the chapters of the SSF guidelines and describes the implications for women and gender related issues for each, based on definitions, gender-impact, case studies, action points for policy makers and CSOs, deduced from each analysis, and recommendations for policy makers and recommendations for CSOs. The recommendations are detailed in the table in annex.

Following the adoption of the gender handbook, a video was issued by FAO on this specific matter.⁵

It is important that this video and the information regarding the Handbook are spread and communicated in fisheries communities in order for women and actors to know what they are entitled to and know what to advocate to decision-makers and CSOs.

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⁵ FAO, "SSF Guidelines: Gender Equity and Equality", 17 April 2018. Available at: <https://youtu.be/BolcVAAYEOW>