



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

Information Package

for the

Launch of the International Secretariat of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)

Victoria, Seychelles – 28 May 2019

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The need for transparency and participation in marine fisheries

Many developing countries have extensive and very valuable fish resources. But coastal states face a **complex challenge**: ensuring that fishing and fish trade contribute to income, employment, food and nutrition for millions of people, while also conserving marine biodiversity for future generations.

Furthermore, in many cases fisheries are poorly managed and overseen, comprising a number of issues, such as inadequate fisheries regulations, illegal and unreported fishing, fleet overcapacity, legal overfishing, ill-directed subsidies, corruption, poor – or what may be perceived as unjust – fisheries management decisions. This often results in the overexploitation of stocks and significant socio-economic loss, creating a classic poverty trap of ever-declining stocks and decreasing revenues. The World Bank estimates that the poor management of marine fisheries results in an annual economic loss of more than USD 80 billion and of catches by 13 percent¹.

While there are many aspects to achieve sustainable fisheries, the **public availability of credible information is essential**. Yet, despite stronger demands for governments to disclose information and commercial fishing companies experiencing growing public scrutiny about their economic, environmental and social impacts, basic information still often remains out of the public domain. Many countries and fishing companies omit to publish important information on a range of aspects on fisheries management, and dissemination of information is often not timely, of insufficient quality, or presented in ways that make it inaccessible to citizens.

Public access to information on how the environment is being exploited is fundamental for good governance. Coastal countries, local fishing communities, private companies, investors, retailers and partner countries engaged in fishing agreements stand to benefit from good and transparent management, ensuring a long-term contribution of the fisheries sector to the national economy and the fair distribution of revenues.

Transparency is therefore a prerequisite for informed public debates on fisheries policies and for achieving meaningful participation in fisheries decision-making. But it is not only the availability of information that counts; it is also essential that it is accessible and that citizens have the assurance that the information provided by governments and fishing companies is credible. This challenge is unlikely to be met by a single actor or a stakeholder group alone. Instead, it needs a collective effort by all relevant actors to incorporate a variety of perspectives and enhance transparency and trust over time.

¹ World Bank. 2017. The Sunken Billions Revisited: Progress and Challenges in Global Marine Fisheries. Environment and Development. Washington, DC: World Bank.

About the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) helps countries to achieve and maintain high levels of transparency on the management of their marine fisheries sector and the activities of fishers and fishing companies.

- ➔ The FiTI is a **global initiative** and does not focus on a single country or on a region. It seeks to establish a global level playing field among fisheries countries. The more participating countries, the more power this initiative will get!
- ➔ The FiTI is a **voluntary initiative**. However, once a country has decided to participate, mandatory requirements must be followed.
- ➔ The implementation of the FiTI is **country-centered**. The intention to join the FiTI must come from a country's government.
- ➔ The FiTI is a **multi-stakeholder initiative**, ensuring that stakeholders from government, companies and civil society are equally represented.
- ➔ The FiTI is **not owned or operated by one organisation** nor does it represent the work of a single interest group. Instead, the diversity of different stakeholders is a central feature of how the FiTI works, for national implementations as well as international governance.
- ➔ The FiTI complements and supports other **national, regional and global efforts** for achieving responsible fisheries governance.
- ➔ As of today (May 2019), seven countries have publicly committed to implement the FiTI: Guinea, Indonesia, Mauritania, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles.

Initiated by the government of Mauritania in 2015, and launched in 2017 in Bali, Indonesia, the FiTI has enjoyed considerable support from coastal states, fishing companies, multilateral and non-governmental organisations.

The FiTI Standard

At the heart of the initiative is the FiTI Standard, a global agreement that defines for the **first time** what information on fisheries should be published online by public authorities.

The FiTI Standard is the outcome of extensive discussions, spanning nearly two years, by representatives from governments, large-scale and small-scale fishing sector organisations, multinational and regional fisheries organisations and civil society groups working on fisheries and marine conservation.

A key requirement of the FiTI Standard is that implementing countries must publish **annual FiTI Reports** that deliver three major results:

☑ A **through assessment of 12 transparency requirements**, highlighting whether specific information is collated by national authorities and if this information is accessible, complete and represents the 'best available':

- (1) *Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents*
- (2) *Fisheries Tenure Arrangements*
- (3) *Foreign Fishing Access Agreements*
- (4) *The State of the Fisheries Resources*
- (5) *Large-Scale Fisheries (Vessel Registry, Payments for fishing, Recorded catch data)*
- (6) *Small-Scale Fisheries*
- (7) *Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade*
- (8) *Fisheries Law Enforcement*
- (9) *Labour Standards*
- (10) *Fisheries Subsidies*
- (11) *Official Development Assistance*
- (12) *Beneficial Ownership*

☑ A **summary** of published information for each transparency requirements to support public understanding and debate.

☑ **Recommendations** on what steps can be taken by national authorities to improve public information on the fisheries sector over time.

Increasing transparency and participation under the FiTI is based on a number of key principles, including:

Multi-Stakeholder participation: The FiTI is implemented in countries through National Multi-Stakeholder Groups, consisting of representatives from government, business and organised civil society. These permanent groups work collectively to assess the information in the public domain, make recommendations on how to improve information published by national authorities and jointly approve the publication of FiTI Reports.

Progressive improvements: Countries are not expected 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, they must demonstrate improvements over time. As such, engaging with the FiTI is not intended to be a burdensome and costly research activity. It 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.

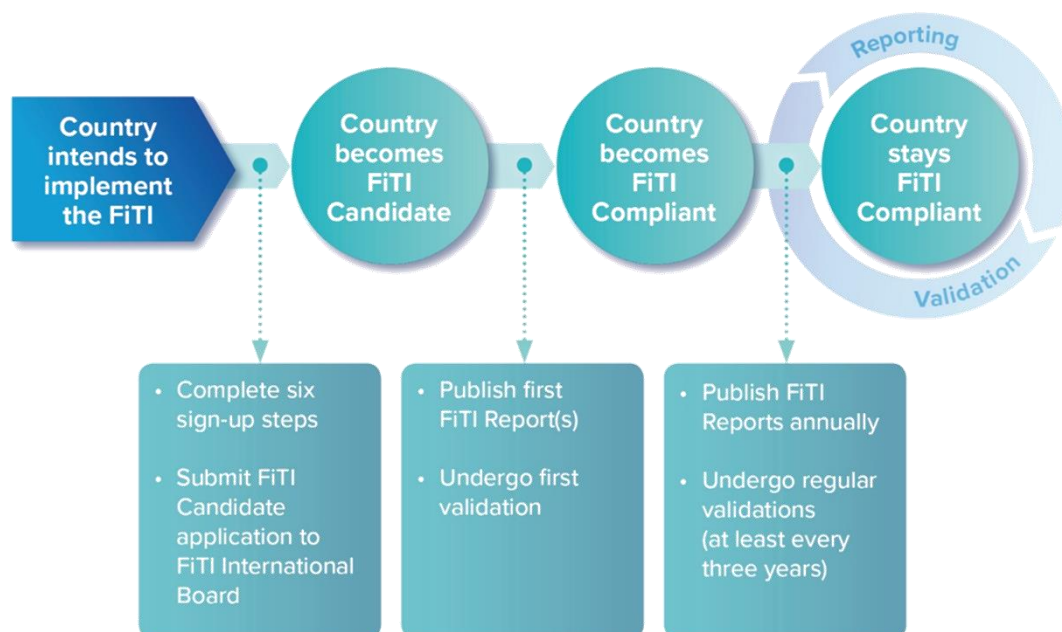
Transparency in the public domain: The FiTI emphasises the need for national authorities to develop and strengthen their own systems for collating and publishing information online in a complete and accessible manner. The FiTI Report is therefore not intended to replace or duplicate existing government information systems.

Public debate: The FiTI seeks to stimulate public debates on how the fisheries sector is managed, enabling relevant stakeholders as well as citizens to support reforms towards better governance of their marine fisheries. The FiTI does not directly tell countries how fisheries can be improved, nor does it set out to highlight mistakes or weaknesses in decision-making, or bad fishing practices. It does, however, offer an important means to raise levels of openness and public access to information which can support countries in maintaining or achieving robust democratic governance and accountability in their fisheries sector.

National implementations of the FiTI

Becoming part of the FiTI should appeal to all stakeholders that appreciate the enormous value of marine fisheries, in terms of food & nutrition security, employment, the value to national economies, as well as the cultural significance of fishing and the production of high-quality food. Promoting these positive features of fisheries lies at the heart of the FiTI.

The intention to join the FiTI must come from a country's head of state or government, or an appropriately delegated government representative.



In brief:

- ➔ A country must implement six sign-up steps and submit a Candidate application to the FiTI International Board.
- ➔ If the application is approved, the country is considered a **FiTI Candidate country**.
- ➔ The next phase involves implementing a core feature of the FiTI: producing the first FiTI Report(s).
- ➔ After publication and undergoing successfully its first validation, a country is declared a **FiTI Compliant country**.
- ➔ This status is maintained if the country continues to adhere to the FiTI Standard throughout subsequent validations.

International governance of the FiTI

The FiTI is governed by the **FiTI International Board**², which oversees the activities of the FiTI through regular Board meetings, committee meetings and more frequent Board circulars. The FiTI International Board is represented by the FiTI Chair (i.e. Prof. Dr. Peter Eigen). Furthermore, the International Board safeguards the integrity of the initiative by, inter alia, validating regularly country activities. While the implementation of the FiTI is voluntary, the FiTI Standard lays out minimum requirements for countries that seek to implement the FiTI in order to ensure that all implementing countries work towards the same levels of transparency. Through regular standardised validations, the International Board holds all FiTI implementing countries to the same global standard, and promotes dialogue and learning at the national level and across countries.

The **FiTI International Secretariat** is responsible for the day-to-day running of the FiTI. It provides the technical and administrative support to the FiTI International Board, to which it is also accountable. The FiTI International Secretariat also interacts frequently with countries to support implementation by sharing lessons learned with stakeholders, providing technical advice, managing the validation process and highlighting results in countries. The International Secretariat is led by a Director (i.e. Mr. Sven Biermann), who reports to the FiTI International Board through the Chair.

The International Secretariat is currently hosted by the non-profit organisation HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform³ in Berlin/Germany. **The commitment of the Government of the Seychelles to host the FiTI International Secretariat in Victoria/Seychelles in 2019 was announced at the 2018 Our Ocean Conference in Bali/Indonesia by H.E. Vincent Meriton, Vice-President of the Seychelles.**

With the transition of the FiTI International Secretariat to the Seychelles, a dedicated non-profit legal entity (in form of an Association) will be created in the Seychelles under Seychellois law. Through this entity, the FiTI obtains its own legal personality in order to e.g. hire personnel, contract services, obtain and manage funding and ensure accountability.

² More information can be found at: <http://fisheriestransparency.org/fiti-international-board>

³ The HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform is a not-for-profit organisation, based in Berlin/Germany. Its mission is to strengthen participation and transparency for sustainable solutions of societal challenges. <http://www.governance-platform.org/en/>

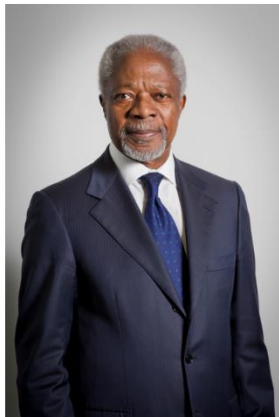
Benefits of implementing the FiTI

Stakeholders, such as governments and the commercial fishing industry, are increasingly aware that improvements in transparency are not only expected of them, but will be beneficial to their interests. By making fisheries management more transparent and inclusive, the FiTI yields benefits for all actors.

- ➔ **Governments** benefit from an enhanced reputation by demonstrating a clear commitment to good governance for responsible fisheries. This can enhance the trust in public authorities, leading to an improved contracting, trade and investment environment. Increasingly, foreign investors, suppliers, retailers and international donors base their investment and sourcing decisions on an assessment of the quality of a country's governance as well as political risks. Empirical evidence shows that countries improving transparency and meaningful participation between governments, the private sector and civil society, economic growth and foreign investment can be increased. This may become even more relevant in the context of developing sustainable "blue economies".
- ➔ **Governments as well as their fisheries partners** benefit equally by demonstrating that the country is getting a fair deal for its fishery resources, contributing to greater economic and political stability and food & nutrition security.
- ➔ **Industrial fishing companies** benefit from an enhanced reputation in the market and a 'level playing field' where all governments provide information according to a coherent framework.
- ➔ **Small-scale fishers** benefit from an increased recognition of their contribution to the country's food & nutrition security and development, while improved transparency supports responsible governance of tenure that is needed for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries.
- ➔ **Civil Society Organizations, workers and consumers** benefit from an enhanced ability to hold governments and companies accountable through an increased amount of information in the public domain. Furthermore, civil society organizations will benefit from greater involvement in the production of credible information on fisheries, being recognized as an equal stakeholder in the country's national Multi-Stakeholder Group.

The FiTI also helps tackling other issues which impact all actors in the fisheries sector, including supporting the fight against corruption as well as Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing.

Credentials



“In Africa and around the world, fisheries play a crucial role in supporting livelihoods, providing employment and driving social economic development. However, the future of the world’s fisheries is seriously threatened and this global challenge is far greater than any country can handle on its own.

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative, with transparency and participation as its cornerstones, makes an invaluable contribution to safeguard what is amongst the most vital resources on the planet.”

Kofi Annan

Chair of the Africa Progress Panel, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate



“The Government of the Republic of Seychelles is whole heartily committed to ensuring that the Fisheries Transparency Initiative help us advance our efforts in shifting to a sustainable fisheries and to implementing our Blue Economy. I am convinced that FITI will be of great value to governments all around the world, as well as to the fishing industry, artisanal fishers, civil society and investors.

We are therefore very proud to be the new home of the FITI International Secretariat. Together we can make a real difference and have a lasting impact for future generations.”

Vincent Meriton

Vice-President of the Republic of Seychelles



“ For too long, we’ve been exploiting our resources beyond sustainable levels.

We must act quickly to reverse this trend and help our oceans regenerate. But this can only be achieved if governments, businesses and civil society work together and if more information on fisheries is available in the public domain.

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative, with its build-in multi-stakeholder orientation, is a unique effort to enhance the public availability of credible information for the benefit of a more sustainable management of marine fisheries.”

Pascal Lamy

Former Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO)



“We can only address the tremendous challenges that global fisheries are facing in a collective effort, by bringing governments, business, civil society, academia and media together on this important quest.

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative makes a unique contribution to the sustainable development of fisheries by setting clear requirements on what is expected from countries regarding transparency and multi-stakeholder participation in fisheries.

I hope that many coastal countries join the FiTI and contribute to a global level playing field of transparency in marine fisheries.”

Prof. Dr. Peter Eigen

1st Chair of the FiTI International Board, Founder of Transparency International



“Transparency and participation are key elements of good governance.

Through the FiTI, countries can not only demonstrate a clear commitment to good governance for responsible fisheries. It can also improve a country’s investment climate.”

Sidi Ould Tah

Director General of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)



“In addition to the other major efforts, FiTI is an exceptional opportunity to improve the international governance of fisheries and oceans transparency and participation.

ATLAFCO, as an African intergovernmental fisheries cooperation organization, is fully associated with this global and proactive approach by promoting its principles and objectives.”

Abdelouahed Benabbou

Executive Secretary of the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO)

Appendix I: A Seychelles overview

The Republic of Seychelles comprises 115 islands spread over an Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) of 1.37 million km². The islands make up only 455 km² which means that 99.96% of Seychelles is the Indian Ocean, making it a Large Oceanic State, with two main pillars of the economy being tourism and fisheries.

Seychelles is heavily reliant on its fisheries and the contribution to the GDP in 2013 according to the World Bank was reported as 8%, contributing 17% of the total employment of the population of only 94,000. The Seychelles also has one of the highest fish consumption per capita (circa 65kg per annum), making it the highest in Africa.⁴

The fisheries sector comprises of an artisanal sub-sector that is exclusively Seychellois, comprising of approximately 450 fishing vessels of 1500 full-time fishermen that fish mainly for small pelagic (as well as octopus, sea cucumber, lobsters, sharks etc.,) and they generate a total catch of around 4,000-5,000 metric tonnes per year. Only around 10% is exported, either fresh or frozen.

The semi-industrial sub-sector has only around 35 vessels and targets large pelagic such as swordfish and tuna, bringing in a total catch of 250-300 tonnes per year. The fish are stored on fresh ice and 60% of the catch is exported to Europe.

Dominated by foreign owned fishing vessels consisting of purse seiners and long-liners licensed to fish in Seychelles waters, the industrial fishing sector is primarily tuna fisheries. Port Victoria is a prime hub for tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean.

In view that marine fisheries is such a key contributor to the social, economic and cultural fabric of Seychelles, the fisheries sector has taken a central role in the nation's developmental agenda, from successive National Development Plans to strategies for economic growth. Seychelles has also prioritized the nationalizing of the international agenda for sustainable fisheries, such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and incorporated the pursuit of sustainable fisheries into its Blue Economy Strategic Policy Framework and Roadmap.

⁴ <https://unctad.org/meetings/en/Presentation/ted-ditc-22032017-4-Rassool-NEW.pdf>

Information package

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) aims to strengthen the management and governance systems of Governments and businesses, to in turn stimulate sustainable development and increased confidence in the fisheries sector; therefore, it is regarded as a practical way of getting the fisheries sector to be managed more openly, and it will be instrumental in the implementation of Seychelles' Fisheries Management Plan.

Seychelles expressed interest in joining this initiative in 2015, and a National Multi-Stakeholder Group for it has been established. Moreover, Seychelles showed its commitment at the 'Our Oceans' Conference that was held in Bali in 2018, when it pledged to host the International FiTI Secretariat that is currently based in Berlin, Germany.

A pledge that bore fruit on Tuesday 28th May 2019 through the launching of the FiTI International Secretariat in Victoria, Seychelles by Vice President Vincent Meriton in a ceremony at Statehouse.

Appendix II: Biography



Mr. Sven Biermann

Director of the International Secretariat, Fisheries Transparency Initiative

Co-Founder and Managing Director of the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform gGmbH

Sven Biermann studied finance/taxes/auditing at the technical college in Trier/Germany, where he graduated in 1998. Sven obtained also a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree with a Major in Information Management from the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota/USA.

Throughout his more than 15 years of professional experiences, Sven has been focusing on practical and sustainable solutions for good governance, multi-stakeholder partnerships, corporate social responsibility, risk management and business integrity.

In 2012/13 Sven served as the Senior Advisor to the United Nations Global Compact 10th Principle (anti-corruption).

Prior to this position, Sven spent almost 10 years with the global consulting company Accenture as well as multiple years as the Director of Anti-Corruption projects at the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA School of Governance.