



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

TAKING STOCK

Online Transparency of
Fisheries Management
Information



Republic of Mauritius

2022 Detailed Assessment Report

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This 'TAKING STOCK: Online Transparency of Fisheries Management Information' assessment for Mauritius (2022) is funded by Irish Aid.

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

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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.



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TAKING STOCK: Online Transparency of Fisheries Management Information

assesses the level of information that Mauritius' national authorities publish on government websites regarding the country's marine fisheries sector.

Mauritius' 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

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFRC	Albion Fisheries Research Centre
AISD	AIS Development Corporation
BoM	Bank of Mauritius
CIB	Central Information Bureau
COI	Indian Ocean Commission
DGTS	Digital Government Transformation Strategy
DPO	Data Protection Office
EU	European Union
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMC	Fishery Monitoring Centre
FPS	Fisheries Protection Service
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Government Information Service
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MoBE	Ministry of the Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
MOI	Mauritius Oceanographic Institute
MRIC	Mauritius Research and Innovation Council
MRR	Mauritius Research Repository
MTCI	Ministry of Information, Technology, Communication and Innovation
NODP	National Open Data Policy
NPOA-IUU	National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing

ODA	Official development assistance
PSCU	Port State Control Unit
SEMPA	Southeast Marine Protected Area
SFA	Seychelles Fishing Authority
SPFA	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

DIGITAL LANDSCAPE OF THE MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR IN MAURITIUS ¹

NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

The government of Mauritius is in the process of putting in place a [Freedom of Information Act](#) which, once passed, should provide a legal basis for public access to government information. A [first attempt to pass this bill was made in 2016](#) but it was not approved. Despite this, the Mauritian government remains committed to ensuring that information is widely shared with its citizens and simultaneously promoting citizen participation through various policies, plans and other platforms. Notably, increasing efforts have been made to build [a digital government](#), whose online presence is mainly overseen by the [Government Information Service \(GIS\)](#). This department is organised into the Information Services Division and the Administrative Services Division, whose joint role is to manage the government's online portals (websites) according to the requirements and demands of ministries and departments.

Although most of the efforts under this e-Government initiative have been devoted to the online migration of government services such as payments, procurement and forms - another key objective is to improve access to

information on government service delivery. This goal is outlined in the [Digital Government Transformation Strategy 2019-2022 \(DGTS\)](#), implemented by the Central Informations Bureau (CIB) of the Ministry of Information, Technology, Communication and Innovation (MTCI). This document describes efforts to develop projects and policies based on Open-Data-by-Default, Data Driven Culture, E-Participation, E-Governance, and Digital Inclusiveness.

Progress towards establishing the first pillar listed above was made in 2017, with the introduction of the National Open Data Policy (NODP) by MTCI, CIB, the Data Protection Office (DPO), and the Attorney General's Office. This policy guides government departments on publishing datasets as 'open-by-default', on the open data portal under the international [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence](#); with specific requirements on citing the source and, where appropriate, adjustments that have been made to the original.

In order to increase transparency and improve

¹ This section is intended to provide a brief introduction to the overarching framework through which Mauritius' government 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.

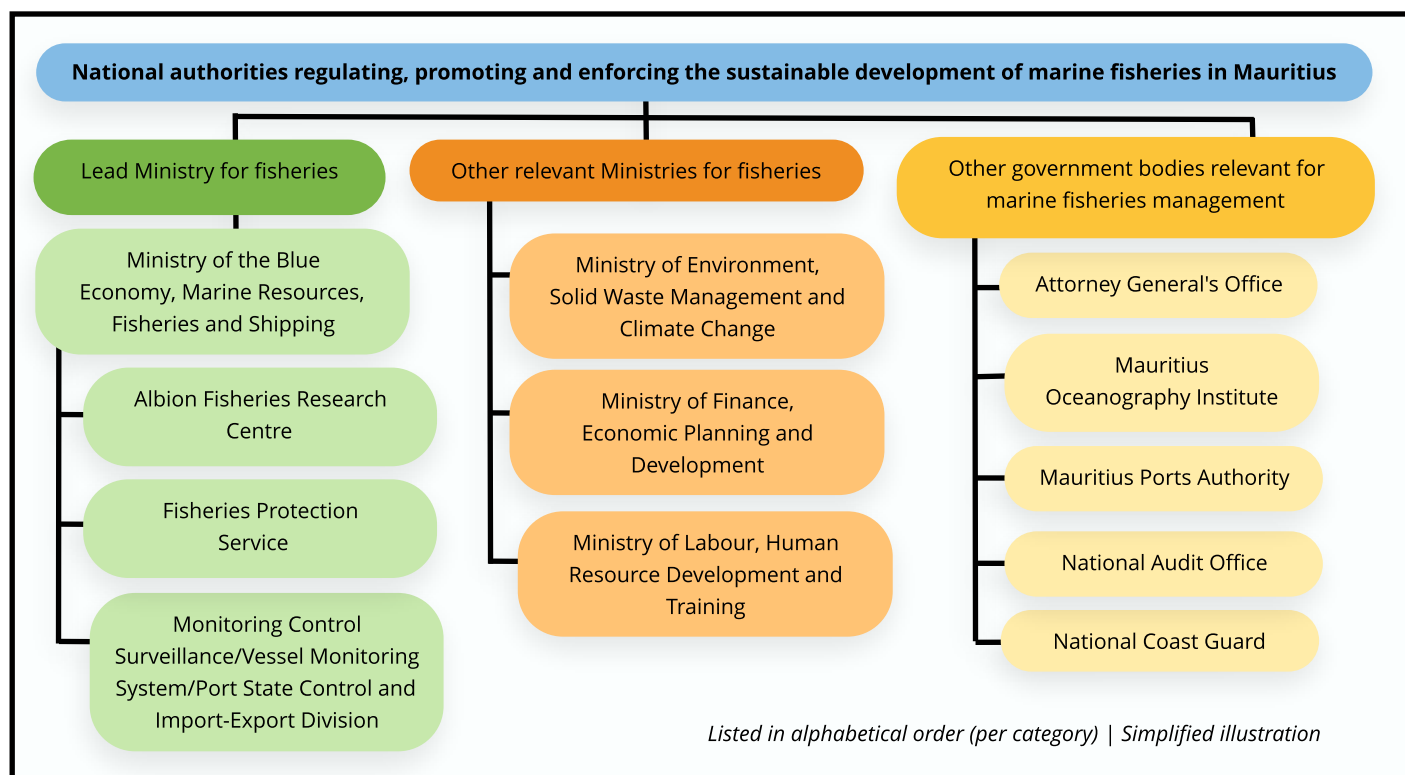
access to government information, a central information portal has also been set up. This portal serves as the main entry point to the websites of the individual ministries, although these websites can be accessed via direct links. In addition to links to the websites of the various

ministries, this portal also provides information about the country, through news, press releases and service catalogues on travel and tourism, technology and innovation, environment and waste management, etc.

NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITIES

Several *national authorities* regulate, promote and enforce the sustainable development of the fisheries sector in Mauritius. The *Ministry of the Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping* (henceforth shortened to MoBE) is the governing body of the Mauritian fisheries sector at the national level.

In addition to MoBE, other Ministries as well as several government organisations provide information on the fisheries sector, as shown below:



GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AND NOTABLE REPORTS

Within the scope of this assessment performed between May and November 2022, three different entry points were used to evaluate whether information on the Mauritius' marine fisheries sector is published online by national

authorities:

- The central portal of the government
- Websites of national authorities
- External search engines, such as Google.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PORTAL

Central portal of the government of Mauritius	https://govmu.org/
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WEBSITES OF MINISTRIES RELEVANT FOR MAURITIUS' MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR

Ministry of the Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping	https://blueconomy.govmu.org/
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WEBSITES OF SUPPORTING PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS RELEVANT FOR MAURITIUS' MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR

Attorney General's Office	https://attorneygeneral.govmu.org/
Mauritius Ports Authority	http://www.mauport.com/
Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change	https://environment.govmu.org/
Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training	https://labour.govmu.org/
Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development	https://mof.govmu.org/
National Audit Office	https://nao.govmu.org/

In addition to the above websites, several national reports and other publications were

consulted for this assessment. These are as follows:

NOTABLE REPORTS AND OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES PUBLISHED BY MAURITIUS' NATIONAL AUTHORITIES RELEVANT FOR ITS MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR

National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	https://blueconomy.govmu.org/Pages/Publication/Fisheries--National-Plan-of-Action-to-prevent,-deter-and-eliminate-illegal,-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing.aspx
Performance Audit Report: Moving Towards Sustainable Artisanal Fishery in Mauritius	http://download.govmu.org/files/2018/P04_ArtnaI_Fishery.pdf
Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021	https://blueconomy.govmu.org/Documents/Publications/Annual%20Report%202020-2021.pdf

ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) almost two-thirds of the population in Mauritius use the internet (based on 2020 data).

The government of Mauritius, through the GIS, carries out several dissemination activities through virtual communication channels aimed at increasing public knowledge of recent developments across the different ministerial departments. GIS has a presence on several social media channels (including Facebook and Instagram) which is used to share current affairs

or information on events. While MoBE does not have a dedicated presence on these channels, any information related to the Ministry is shared through the GIS accounts.

Furthermore, offline outreach activities, often times in partnership with civil society organisations² are conducted within communities to connect with stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in the fisheries sector. These include focus group sessions or educational training aimed at building capacity.

² See for example: <https://govmu.org/EN/newsgov/SitePages/Mauritius-hosts-FPAOIs-Fish-Aggregating-Devices-training-course-for-fishermen.aspx>.

DETAILED ASSESSMENT: ONLINE TRANSPARENCY OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT INFORMATION IN MAURITIUS

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.³ 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**.⁴ 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.⁵

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

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 Mauritius, 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

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 ⁶	Yes	Yes	Yes
	To a full extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

Available online?

On the homepage of the MoBE's website a link to subpages with information for 'Legislations' is provided. This is then further divided between acts and regulations.

As listed on the website, the main legal

instrument regulating fisheries in Mauritius is the [Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007](#). This Act provides rules for the management and conservation of fisheries resources, and it also contains provisions for the protection of marine

⁶ This assessment does not cover legislations at the sub-national level.

areas and habitats. Two additional acts are listed on the website of the MoBE, namely [the Fisheries Welfare Fund Act](#) and [the Fishermen Investment Trust Act](#).

A *chronological list of regulations* relevant to fisheries is published on the MoBE's website. These are predominantly amendments to the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act, such as changes to fee structures for licencing and decisions on imposing closed seasons for specific fisheries.

This assessment considers the list of legislations published on the website of the MoBE to be complete. However, there is one exception. This relates the legislation on octopus fishing. The most recent piece of legislation on the octopus fisheries is the *Fisheries and Marine Resources (Fishing of Octopus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020*. However, the original 2016 regulation, on which the amendment is based, is not published by the MoBE. This means that the additional guidelines provided by the old regulations are missing, such as the definition of a small octopus and where the regulations apply. This

shortcoming is important because some parts of this regulation do not apply to Rodrigues and are not specified in the last amendment. This missing piece of legislation was also not found by searching the records of the official government Gazette, which has been digitised.⁷ However, this text can be found on the [database of legal documents for fisheries](#) produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

It should be noted that the MoBE has announced its intention to produce *a new Fisheries Bill that will replace the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007*. This was proposed as far back as 2015.⁸ [Government statements](#) in March 2022 indicate that the Bill was nearing completion. However, the Bill has yet to be submitted to Parliament and there is no further information provided by the MoBE on the contents of the Bill on its website. Given the extended timeframe of the drafting of this Bill, *a lack of public information on its content and purpose undermines fisheries transparency*. Sharing the Bill for public debate seems to be an urgent task.

Up to date?

The information on acts and regulations published on the website of the MoBE appear to

be up to date and new legislation is added to the website in a timely way.

⁷ Available at: <https://gpd.govmu.org/Pages/Index.aspx>

⁸ Described in the ex post and ex ante evaluation of the EUs sustainable fisheries partnership agreement (2016), <https://nfds.info/assets/EU-Mauritius-FPA-evaluation-final-Report.pdf>

Easy to find?

The list of relevant acts and regulations is easy to find on the website of the MoBE.

However, international best practice is to provide short summaries of acts and regulations to assist members of the public in understanding the contents of legal documents.

This could be considered by the MoBE.

Additionally, in the list of regulations supplied by the MoBE, it should be indicated which regulations are obsolete. Listing regulations that are no longer in force does not help public understanding of the country's legal context.

1-B | FISHERIES POLICY DOCUMENTS ⁹

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (The latest policy documents are published)	Easy to find?
Comprehensive list of national policy documents	No		
No			

Available online?

On the homepage of MoBE's website there is a dedicated page for '*Policy document and report*' (sic). This is found from a drop-down menu entitled 'publications', and then 'documents'.

The page of information on policy documents includes a *5-year strategic plan* for fisheries and

the text of the National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (NPOA-IUU). There are also annual reports of the Ministry from 2006 to 2009.

The national five-year plan is undated but seems

⁹ 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.

to have been written in 2005/6. Being about 17 years old, it cannot be considered relevant for understanding national policies today.

The government of Mauritius produced a *Fisheries Master Plan* in 2011/12 that was to run until 2020, however this is *not published on its website and cannot be found online*.¹⁰ The AIS Development Corporation (AISD) had been contracted by the World Bank to assist the national authorities in developing a fisheries and aquaculture plan, which may have been related to the Fisheries Master Plan. However, since it was not possible to determine the date of this contract, we do not know if it is active or not. Additionally, a search on the ministry's website for the term 'master plan' yields only the Mauritius Aquaculture Master Plan, which is not considered in this assessment.

This assessment also looked at policy commitments produced by the government in relation to international strategies for the responsible management of fisheries. On this, the MoBE publishes its NPOA-IUU. However, this assessment was not able to find the *National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks*. According to the most recent country report submitted to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) by the government of Mauritius, this plan was finalised in 2015 and a copy was forwarded to the Secretariat of the IOTC. However, a copy of this plan is not available anywhere online.

Another important document outlining fisheries policies in Mauritius is the *Three-Year Strategic Plan 2018/19 – 2020/21* adopted by the Government for the whole economy. A prominent section of this deals with the Ocean Economy and includes goals for fisheries development. This includes the completion of a *marine spatial plan*. Although this 3-year strategic plan is not published on the website of the MoBE it can be found on the website of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development. However, it was not possible to locate the marine spatial plan online and it is not clear if this plan has been completed.

Mauritius is also a party to international fisheries management organisations, including the *Indian Ocean Tuna Commission* and the *Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement*. None of the resulting policies adopted through these organisations are published by the government of Mauritius.

Summary information on new fisheries policies is provided in the text of the annual reports of the MoBE, which are published on the website of the MoBE. These can be found in two places; the ones up to 2009 are listed under policy documents, whereas the more recent ones are listed on a dedicated page entitled 'annual reports'. The text of some of these annual reports includes a section on national policy. However, for the most recent annual reports (2017-2021), this text is a short paragraph only and cannot be considered a comprehensive

¹⁰ The contents of this master plan are described in non-government reports, such as: "Revitalization of fisheries research in Mauritius", published by the Indian Ocean Commission in 2012, <https://www.fao.org/3/az392e/az392e.pdf>.

description of the government's fisheries policies.

Additionally, a description of current policy objectives can be found in the text of speeches made to parliament by the Minister of the MoBE, which are published on the website of the MoBE (found under 'archives'). However, again, the information provided in these speeches are brief summaries of key policies and they cannot be considered to provide comprehensive information. In the [most recent speech published by the MoBE](#), the Minister announced important policies, including the plan to attract significant private investments to develop a Mauritius owned industrial fishing fleet. He also announced the intention to dramatically expand the so-called banks fishery:

"We have currently 35 semi-industrial bank fishing vessels with a catch of 2,000 tons annually. We expect to increase this fleet to 100 semi-industrial fishing vessels over the coming four years so as to boost up the catch to 6,000 tons yearly."

Further details of this new policy are not mentioned in any other government document.

Overall, this assessment finds that the

requirement *of publishing a list of policy documents must be seen as largely incomplete.*

Several core national and international policy documents are not published at all, whereas other published documents are clearly outdated. A number of fleeting references are made to what appear to be important policies (e.g. in speeches), such as a Marine Spatial Plan or schemes to upgrade artisanal fisheries into semi-industrial fishing, but there is no further detail provided. Also, annual reports are perhaps the most obvious way in which policies are published, but this does not approximate a comprehensive list of policy documents and very often includes only brief descriptions of policies.

If a member of the public was to search online for government information, including the annual reports, they would find limited information to understand what the primary policies are for the fisheries sector, beyond brief statements. It is, however, difficult to know whether the problem stems from policy documents being left unpublished, or from the government not producing detailed policy documents.

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	No		
No			

Available online?

There are no fisheries management plans published on the website of the MoBE. However, some fisheries management plans have been produced by the government.

- In 2012 the government developed a fisheries management plan for the shallow water demersal species of the Saya de Malha and Nazareth Banks.¹² The then Minister of the Ministry of the Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping also told parliament on the 24th of October 2017, that a fisheries management plan was being implemented in the Banks Fisheries, which included restrictions on the number of vessels

allowed entry.¹³ This fisheries management plan also included the objective of an annual review undertaken by the (former) Ministry of Fisheries, to be shared with the Banks Fisheries Advisory Committee, but none of these reviews are published online.

- Also in 2012, the government produced a management plan for the protection of the Blue Bay and Balaclava Bay marine parks, which were created with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). These management plans are not available online, although some reports on the contents of the management plans can

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.

¹² A description of this plan is available in the report entitled 'Fisheries management plans, policies and legal frameworks in the Republic of Mauritius', published by Ecofish, 2022. Available: <https://ecofish-programme.org/fisheries-management-plans-policies-and-legal-framework-in-the-republic-of-mauritius/>

¹³ <https://blueeconomy.govmu.org/Documents/PQ%202017%202020%20Master%20doc%20%281%29.pdf?csf=1&e=7OE0o5> (page 8)

be found through external web searches.¹⁴

- According to an evaluation of the project entitled, 'Mainstreaming biodiversity in the management of the coastal zone of the Republic of Mauritius', undertaken by UNDP in partnership with the MoBE, it was described that 6 management plans for fisheries reserves were developed in 2018/19, assisted by a consultancy

provided by McAllistair Elliott Partners (UK).¹⁵ However, none of these management plans could be found online.

Overall, while there is evidence that the government of Mauritius has produced fisheries management plans, none of these have been published online by the government.

¹⁴ See for example this draft report on the assessment of the management plan (undated/no author) published on the website of the Mauritius NGO, ECO-SUD: <https://ecosud.mu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BlueBay-MP.pdf>

¹⁵ This information can be found in the mid-term review of the programme, available at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/detail/18706>



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.¹⁶

The rules of tenure in marine fisheries in Mauritius are somewhat hard to understand. This is due to the complexity of the fisheries sector and a lack of clarity and consistency for the definition of different categories of fishing used by the government.

To simplify, the following types of commercial fisheries exist in Mauritius and these categories are often used as the basis for conceptualising the rules and procedures for governing tenure arrangements:

1. *Industrial fishing*: This comprises larger vessels targeting pelagic species including tuna and bill fish. The industrial fishing sector is further broken down between purse seine fishing for tuna to supply tuna canning factories, and long-line fishing to
2. *Coastal artisanal fisheries*: this comprises small-scale fisheries targeting numerous species in the waters close to the main island of Mauritius and Rodrigues. Such fisheries include those that operate from boats, as well as fishing from the shore and gleaning activities. Multiple gears are used by fishers, including nets, traps and handlines, while harpoon fishing and the use of poisons and explosives have been banned. Historically most fishing by this sector has been concentrated in the

supply frozen fish. In both the purse seine and long-lining sector there are Mauritius-flagged vessels and foreign-flagged vessels (see section 5 for more information).

¹⁶ More information about the importance of transparency in fisheries tenure arrangements can be found in our 2nd transparency briefing (or 'tbrief', for short) here: <https://www.fiti.global/tbrief-series>

'lagoon areas' of the islands, but there has been the development of more fishing beyond the lagoons and in deeper waters, including through government subsidies for the purchase of larger and more seaworthy vessels (including what are referred to as 'canottes'). The coastal artisanal fisheries also include a distinct fishery that targets fish from a network of anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) installed by the government in coastal waters. Only fishers that have undergone government training on fishing from FADs are permitted to use these devices.

3. *Semi-industrial fishing from the outer banks:* A distinct group of fisheries targets fish found in the various atolls and small islands found in the more remote areas of Mauritius's EEZ (i.e., St Brandon, Nazareth, Saya de Malha and the Chagos Archipelago) located between 250 and 1200 nautical miles north of Mauritius. This involves larger vessels that can travel from the main island of Mauritius and freeze, chill or salt fish to return them to the main islands. This fishery is poorly described in government reports but seems to include vessels using various techniques targeting both shallow waters and deeper waters, including trawling, long-lining and hand-lining. Some of these vessels also operate as 'motherships', collecting fish from the small populations of inhabitants of some of these outer islands. Some motherships also take with them smaller vessels that catch fish in shallow waters. There are references showing that

semi-industrial fishing in the outer banks is also undertaken by foreign-flagged vessels, including from Seychelles, Madagascar, Comoros and Sri Lanka.

The *sports fishing sector*—largely catering to big game fishing for tourists—is also categorised as a form of commercial fisheries in some government reports. This is because sports fishing companies are allowed to retain catch and sell this in local markets. This represents a significant source of fish in Mauritius.

This simplified overview of the commercial fisheries sector in Mauritius is based on the understanding of the researchers of this report. The Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007 does not define key terms such as artisanal fisheries or semi-industrial fishing. Other government reports on fisheries, including annual reports, also adopt differing approaches to categorise fisheries. For example, in the latest annual report issued by the MoBE, information on catches is presented for both coastal 'artisanal' and 'amateur' fisheries. However, the concept of amateur fishing is not defined in any government publication.

There is also much ambiguity surrounding the banks fisheries as this is also referred to in reports as 'advanced' fisheries, or 'demersal' fisheries or 'chilled' fisheries. In annual reports published by the MoBE in 2018 and 2019, catch data was summarised for the Banks Fishery, and then also for the *Saint Brandon Inshore Fishery*, the *Chilled Fish Fishery*, and the *Deepwater Snapper/Grouper Fishery*.

Confusion in government reports partly stems

from an inconsistent approach to sub-categorisation based on one or several categories defined by vessel characteristics, gear types, geographical location or target species. *A*

more consistent approach would improve public understanding on tenure rules, while also helping to organise fisheries statistics and policies.

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

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	Partially	Yes	No
Duration of such rights and authorisations	Yes	Yes	No
Transferability of such rights and authorisations	Yes	Yes	No
Divisibility of such rights and authorisations	Yes	Yes	No
Authorities/persons that are legally entitled to issue such rights and authorisations	Yes	Yes	No
Mandatory administrative procedures required to determine their issue	Yes	Yes	No
Conditions relating to fishing effort	Yes	Yes	No
Conditions relating to ecosystem impact	Yes	Yes	No
Conditions relating to landings	Yes	Yes	No
Conditions relating to transshipping	Yes	Yes	No
Conditions relating to catch reporting	Yes	Yes	No
Procedures and rules for authorising a Mauritius-flagged vessel to fish in a third country or on the High Seas	No		
Provisions for formal mechanisms of external oversight and public consultations of fisheries tenure decisions	No		
	To a full extent	To a full extent	No

The basic framework governing commercial marine fishing in Mauritius can be found in the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007.

However, since this Act was authorised, the government has passed several further regulations that amend or alter rules, including on fees payable, catch reporting, restrictions on fishing effort and on closures of certain fisheries, such as sea-cucumber and octopus.

In reviewing information on the aspects listed in the above table, this assessment was able to find most information in the Act and subsequent regulations. However, there were a few aspects that this assessment could not find information on.

- While the fees for fisheries access could be found for foreign- and nationally-flagged purse seine and longline vessels, it was not possible to locate information on fees payable for different types of gears used by coastal fisheries. The Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007 establishes that fisheries must pay a fee for gear permits.
- Additionally, if fishers want to sell fish they must buy a fishmonger's license. However, the fee for this could not be found. According to [financial statements on government revenues](#) published by the Ministry for Finance, Planning and Development, total government revenues from fishmonger licences is forecast to be 400,000 rupees for the year 2022/23, which is approximately 9,000USD. The Ministry

also reports that just over 1000 fish mongers have been registered with the government, and this illustrates that the annual fees for a fishmonger's licence are low.

- This assessment could not find conclusive evidence of the differing fees applicable to vessels in the so-called banks fishery, including those that are foreign-flagged. Additionally, in several annual reports issued by the Ministry responsible for fisheries it is described that the government authorises 'mother ships' in the banks fisheries. However, there is no description in the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007 or subsequent regulations that relates to their authorisation, including the fees applicable.
- There was no information found on the rules and procedures, including fees, for the authorisation of nationally-flagged vessels to fish on the High Seas or in another country's EEZ.
- As noted above, some information on the rules for octopus fishing could not be found due to a piece of legislation missing from the government's website.

Finally, there appears to be *no formal rules for external oversight and public participation on fisheries tenure decisions*. In the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007, Part 3 deals with "Consultative committees". However, the

requirement to develop such committees is left entirely up to the discretion of the Minister. This contrasts to the approach adopted in previous legislation. The 1980 Fisheries Act of Mauritius established a Fisheries Advisory Board, which included members of various different government departments as well as several permanent positions for representatives of fishers and fish traders.¹⁷ This was replaced in 1984 by a National Committee on Fisheries Development, although this no longer seems to exist.¹⁸ This assessment found no government information on any existing permanent or ad

hoc committees for public participation in fisheries management. However, reference was found to the “Banks Fishery Advisory Committee” in a technical report published by the Indian Ocean Commission in 2021 (see above on fisheries management plans). There is no information on this committee found on government websites, and it was not possible to confirm if this committee is active. It is therefore difficult to know if a lack of information on participatory bodies in fisheries management is due to such bodies not existing, or a failure of the government to publish information on them.

Up to date?

The information found on tenure rules was

considered up to date.

Easy to find?

Most of the information on tenure for commercial fisheries was tenure was considered difficult to find. Several rules can only be found by reading the text of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007 and the subsequent amendments. Understanding tenure arrangements is therefore a time-consuming

exercise and involves reading legal texts that are not accessible to the layperson. There is no succinct summary of tenure rules that is aimed at the layperson, including fishers themselves. Indeed, a page on the website of the MoBE entitled ‘information for fishers’ is left blank.

¹⁷ The 1980 Fisheries Act of Mauritius can be found here: <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/html/mat3080.htm>

¹⁸ Described in a legal review of fisheries legislation of Mauritius, published by the FAO in 1986: <https://www.fao.org/3/br487e/br487e.pdf>

2-B | COASTAL SUBSISTENCE FISHING

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	Not produced		
Duration of such rights and authorisations	Not produced		
Authorities/persons that are legally entitled to issue such rights and authorisations	Not produced		
Mandatory administrative procedures required to determine their issue	Not produced		
Conditions relating to fishing effort	Not produced		
Conditions relating to ecosystem impact	Not produced		
Conditions relating to landings (including the sale of fish)	Not produced		
Conditions relating to catch reporting	Not produced		
Provisions for formal mechanisms of external oversight and public consultations of fisheries tenure decisions	Not produced		
Not produced			

Available online?

There is no recognition of subsistence fishing in Mauritius laws, including the right to fish for personal consumption without the need to purchase a fishing permit. However, subsistence fishing, usually defined as fishing for personal consumption, does exist in Mauritius and is

informally permitted. This is because fishing licences are only required for specific fishing gears and a fishmonger licence is required only by those wishing to sell their catch. Fishers using basic fishing gears (handlines) or gleaning from beaches can therefore catch fish without a

permit and they are exempt from paying for a fish monger's licences if they consume their catch personally (or among their family).

In practice, this means subsistence fishing is largely unregulated. However, it should be accepted that the prohibitions on fishing, including the catching of undersized fish, fishing in protected areas and fishing in closed seasons, apply equally to those who are not required to purchase a gear licence or fish monger's permit. Therefore, this assessment considers dedicated

tenure arrangements for subsistence fisheries in Mauritius as not being produced yet.

Furthermore, in some government reports, including annual reports from the Ministry responsible for fisheries during the 2000s, catch data is presented for a category of fishing called 'amateur'. This assessment was unable to determine what this category refers to, but it might correspond to subsistence fishing, i.e. those who fish but are not formerly registered with authorities or require a fishing permit.

2-C | SCIENTIFIC AND EXPLORATORY FISHING

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	Yes	Yes	No
Mandatory administrative procedures required to determine their issue	No		
Conditions relating to fishing effort	Partially	Yes	No
Conditions relating to ecosystem impact	No		
Conditions relating to landings (including the sale of fish)	No		
Conditions relating to catch reporting	Yes	Yes	No

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

Available online?

Scientific and exploratory fishing is not formally defined in the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007, but this Act recognizes that fishing conducted for scientific and research purposes may be necessary where certain types of fishing are prohibited. Thus, it provides that scientific and exploratory fishing may be practiced in such cases, with specific authorizations from the Permanent Secretary.

Our assessment did not locate any specific

regulations for the practice of scientific fishing. Therefore, no details were found on the rules and procedures for issuing such a licence, , including whether fees are charged to obtain a licence, the duration of the licences and how they can be used. This may be because the conditions associated with the authorization of scientific and exploratory fisheries are specified at the discretion of the Permanent Secretary.

Up to date?

The limited information relevant to scientific and

exploratory fishing is up to date.

Easy to find?

Most of the information on tenure for scientific and exploratory fishing was considered difficult to find. Some rules can only be found by reading the text of the Fisheries and Marine Resources

Act 2007 and the subsequent amendments. Understanding tenure arrangements is therefore a time-consuming exercise and involves reading legal texts that are not

accessible to the layperson. There is no succinct summary of tenure rules that is aimed at the

layperson.

2-D | SPORT FISHING

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		
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	No		
No			

Available online?

Sport fishing is not clearly defined in the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007, although this law recognizes that this type of fishing can be practiced in Mauritius.

Article 74 of the Act stipulates that the Minister may promulgate regulations for the purpose of “regulating the management of fishery resources and fishing activities in relation to

sport or recreational fishing”. However, no sport fishing regulations appear to have been published.

Despite this, some online forums allude to the fact that the practice of sport and recreational fishing are subject to certain conditions.

According to the information on these platforms, it would seem that recreational

charters that organise sport fishing activities with their customers must obtain a permit. But no information is available on the website of the national authorities of Mauritius on this. Our assessment assumes therefore that such regulations do exist, but have not been published yet.



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 party¹⁹ that allows the foreign party's fishing vessels to operate in the coastal state's marine jurisdictional waters.²⁰ 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 MAURITIAN 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 Mauritian waters	No		
Related documents, such as Memorandum of Understandings or amendments (if applicable)	No		
No			

Available online?

In accordance with the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007, foreign vessels operating in

Mauritius are licenced under access agreements unless the Permanent Secretary grants them

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone, in the following referred to as 'Mauritian waters'.

special permissions.

Published accounts confirm that Mauritius has three fisheries agreements that allow foreign-flagged vessels to operate in its waters.

- **European Union (EU):** First signed in 1990, the latest Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SPFA) runs from December 8, 2017 to December 7, 2021, which provides an annual financial contribution from the EU of €575,000, in addition to the licence fees paid by vessel owners. The protocol has been extended for 6 months until the new agreement is finalized.
- **Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association:** The first agreement was signed in 2000 and originally authorized ten Japanese long-liners to fish in the EEZ of Mauritius. The agreement has been renewed every two years and remains active today, although it is uncertain how many vessels take up licences and what financial compensation is provided.

- **Seychelles:** Mauritius has maintained a fisheries agreement with the Seychelles since 1990. This is a reciprocal agreement and allows Mauritian vessels to fish in Seychelles waters, while also allowing Seychelles-flagged vessels to fish in Mauritius' waters. The most recent of this agreement ended in 2021. As of February 2022, discussions were underway between the two countries for the renewal of the agreement for an additional period of 60 days, until a new agreement can be concluded.

The Mauritius government does not publish the contracts of any of these fisheries agreements. However, the agreement between Mauritius and the EU can be found on the [website of the European Commission](#). The fisheries agreement between Mauritius and Seychelles is also available from the website of the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA). The agreement with the Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association is not in the public domain.

3-B | MAURITIUS-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 Mauritius-flagged vessels to fish in third country waters	No		

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?
Related documents, such as Memorandum of Understandings or amendments (if applicable)	No		
	No		

Available online?

As outlined in the previous section 3-A, there is an active reciprocal fisheries agreement between the Seychelles and Mauritius. However,

this agreement is not published online by the Mauritian national authorities.



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 Mauritius' marine fish population, including at least the top 5 commercial fish species	No		
Information on trends in the state of stocks and explanations on the reasons for change	No		
No			

Available online?

The MoBE does not publish a national report that provides the public with information on marine fish populations, including those that are the most important for the commercial fisheries sector. In previous years, annual reports of the

Ministry have alluded to problems of overfishing, but only in a general way, i.e. without the use of data or statistical analysis.

It is somewhat confusing to understand which

government department has the overall responsibility to provide data and analysis on the health of marine fish populations.

The *Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC)*, a department of the MoBE is described as the lead organisation responsible for marine fisheries research. Its main functions are to carry out research and monitoring activities to improve knowledge of the fishery resources of the Mauritian EEZ. The activities carried out by this division include the assessment of fish stocks, the monitoring of fishing activities and the communication of information on fishing. However, their dedicated webpage does not provide any studies or reports. According to the MoBE's most recent Annual Report (2020-2021), the AFRC receives funding for undertaking research on fish abundance and the centre has concluded several surveys in different locations of Mauritius. Research for this assessment has located some important studies on the status of fisheries, including in-depth assessments of the Banks fisheries conducted in the late 1990s.²¹ However, these important historical records, which could demonstrate unsustainable levels of fishing, are not published by the government. This is particularly important in the context of new polices seeking to significantly increase catches from the banks over the next four years. In addition to the AFRC, in 2000 the government established the *Mauritius Oceanographic Institute (MOI)*, which is also intended to provide the government with research and analysis,

including on fish populations and marine biodiversity. Their website contains mostly academic papers (many of which are not accessible to the public) but does not provide any annual report that consolidates information on fisheries.

Another body that has responsibilities for research and data analysis in Mauritius is the *Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC)* which operates under the direction of the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation. Their website has a section called 'Ocean and Marine Resources', where a list of projects with relevant links can be found. These projects are mainly research projects to promote the development of the sector, but one research project concerns the biodiversity of Southeast Marine Protected Area (SEMPA) in Rodrigues. Only a very brief summary of the research is available.

The *Mauritius Research Repository (MRR)* of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council was also considered for this assessment. This site is an open access collection of research projects, reports, presentations, publications, academic texts on the Republic of Mauritius. A brief search of this directory for fisheries-related studies yields only two results: An improved and continuous data collection system for the octopus fishery in Rodrigues, and an data collection system for the Restoration of Native Oyster Population at Bambous Virieux & Vieux Grand Port.

²¹ See for example: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08dbc40f0b652dd001b1a/R5484c.pdf>.

Thus, in assessing this transparency element, it appears that the Government of Mauritius has access to its own research on fish populations provided by several government departments

that are funded with public money, as well as the research findings of other organisations, including the IOTC. However, it does not publish information about fish populations online.

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	No		
Information on the methods and data used to assess fish stocks			
Information on ongoing or planned efforts to update and expand fish stock assessments			
No			

Available online?

As mentioned above in section 4-A, the AFRC is recognized as being primarily responsible for fish stock assessment, and it would seem that it carries out assessments, including collecting data on coastal fisheries from fish landing sites. However, this centre does not publish its findings, nor does it have its own website.

A limited number of academic papers that include stock assessments can be found on the website of the MOI. This includes studies on sea cucumber, for example. However, all of these papers are published in scientific journals that require a subscription to access. These reports are therefore not judged to be publicly available

or accessible.

The MOI also publishes a database, the Marine Diversity, and Genetic Data Bank, which contains morphometric and genetic data of marine species to determine the biodiversity of Mauritian waters. This database is separated into different sections: fish, molluscs, sea cucumbers, crustaceans, sponges and soft corals. However, this database does not provide any indicators of the health of fish populations.

In 2020, the President of Mauritius stated to Parliament that [a stock assessment of multiple species, including lobsters and squid, would be](#)

[produced by the government](#). However, this assessment found no further information on government websites or reports that indicate ongoing or planned activities to update or expand stock assessments.

In the latest Annual report of the MoBE, it was stated that a “fisheries mapping survey was undertaken at Agalega following a request from the Outer Island Development Corporation wherein 8 sites were surveyed for fish and substrate cover. The objective of the survey was to identify fish resources, their distribution and abundance in the Agalega waters in view of establishing potential fishing possibilities”. However, this assessment was unable to find this report online.

It should be noted that previous annual reports, covering the years 2003-2008, by the Ministry of Agro-Industries and Fisheries have provided

data and analysis on fish landings, the size of fish and indicators of overfishing. However, the data and analysis provided by the government has decreased in quality over time.²²

This assessment is unsure whether the lack of public reports on stock assessments is due to the government not producing them, or whether stock assessments are being produced but are not being published. It is assumed that some stock assessments have been done, although their coverage is likely to be limited. This is particularly so for coastal fisheries. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to suggest the correct answer to this transparency element is ‘no’ rather than ‘not applicable’. Further information is required to understand the extent and scope of stock assessments in the country.

²² See for example the fisheries research summary from the 2006 Annual report: <https://blueeconomy.govmu.org/Documents/3-fisheriesresearch.pdf>



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.

As described above, in their approach to the management of commercial fisheries in Mauritius the government recognises a distinction between industrial and semi-industrial fishing vessels, although this distinction is not clearly established in relevant laws. For the purpose of this assessment, vessels commonly referred to as semi-industrial will be included in this section, as opposed to the following section that considers information on small-scale fisheries.

A summary of the vessels active in Mauritius' large-scale fisheries are as follows:²³

- *Foreign-flagged purse seine fishing vessels*, targeting tuna species for canning:
 - EU-flagged vessels operating under the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership

Agreement.

- Seychelles-flagged vessels under the bi-lateral reciprocal agreement.
- Korean-flagged vessels, operating under licences.

- *Foreign-owned long line vessels* targeting tuna, sharks and other billfish:
 - Approximately 140 vessels authorised from China, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Oman in 2017/18.
- *Nationally-flagged purse seine fishing vessels*:
 - The numbers on these vessels are varying: 7 vessels were reported in 2015, 3 in 2020 and currently, according to the vessel registry of the IOTC, 4 vessels. A high of 7 in 2015, 3 reported in 2020 and currently 4 according to the vessel

²³ This information is compiled from reports to the IOTC as well as the Ex-post and Ex-ante evaluation study of the Implementing Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius; <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/be51d65b-bf5d-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1>

²⁴ IOTC Country report.

registry of IOTC.²⁴

- All vessels are owned by the French fishing company SAPMER.

■ *Nationally-flagged long line fishing fleet*

targeting tuna and billfish:

- Again, the numbers, numbers are highly variable, showing that registering for the Mauritius flag is mostly done by foreign owned vessels that are 'flag hopping'. There were only 2 vessels in 2020, but 15 in 2019. Currently there are 13 registered on the IOTC vessel list.

■ *Nationally-flagged semi-industrial vessels*

targeting demersal and pelagic species related to the 'banks fishing'.

- Precise numbers are not known, but

approximately 35-50 vessels are reported to be authorised.

- Historically, the banks fisheries involved mother ships from converted industrial long liners, carrying smaller boats. However, the fishery has evolved to include semi-industrial long liners and trawlers.

■ *Foreign-flagged vessels targeting demersal and pelagic species* related to the 'banks fishing':

- In 2011, the government of Mauritius reported 11 licences issued to foreign-flagged vessels. No further, up-to-date information is available.

5-A | VESSELS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? (Published data is not older than 1 year)	Easy to find?
Registry of Mauritius- and foreign-flagged vessels authorised to fish in Mauritian 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?

According to the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007, the Permanent Secretary for Fisheries is required to compile a record of all licenced vessels containing the following information:

1. The name of the fishing boat or fishing vessel;
2. The port and country of registration;
3. Any identification mark assigned to the boat or vessel;
4. Previous registration details;
5. Communication details;
6. The Lloyds/IMO registration number;
7. The international radio call sign;
8. The length overall, draft and beam;
9. The engine power;
10. The net and gross registered tonnage;

11. The type of refrigeration system;
12. The material of build;
13. The boat or vessel type and fishing method and gears;
14. The hold capacities in cubic metres;
15. The date of build;
16. The number of crew, including fishermen and persons commonly known as “frigoboy”;;
17. The name and address of the agent in Mauritius;
18. The name, address and nationality of any natural or legal person with beneficial ownership of the fishing boat or fishing vessel;

19. Particulars of any previous offences committed by the use of the fishing boat or fishing vessel; and any other information as the Permanent Secretary may determine

In addition, according to the NPOA-IUU, this register is used annually to provide information on vessels fishing for tuna to the IOTC. However, the government of Mauritius does not provide a public registry of authorised industrial fishing vessels. If the Act has been administered, then the Mauritian authorities have information that could be used to provide a comprehensive public vessel registry if they chose to do so.

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	Yes	Yes	Yes
Name of the natural person or legal entity that made the payment	No		
Name of the national authority who received the payment	No		
Date on which payment was received by the national authority	No		
Purpose of the payment	No		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

Available online?

The Financial Highlights chapter of the latest annual report by the MoBE lists information on the fees received for licensing of fishing vessels. However, there are no means to identify from what sub-sectors these fees derive from and if this total amount includes fees paid from semi-industrial and coastal fisheries.

Financial statements on the revenues received through fisheries fees are also published by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development. These tally with the figures published by the MoBE, but again provide no

further disaggregation of revenues.

A look at previous annual reports, notably the Fisheries Management chapters of the annual reports of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries Division from 2003-2011, shows that information on payments specifically from large-scale vessels, including information disaggregated by flag state and type of vessel was published. This level of information was reduced in subsequent annual reports. However, this information is considered too old to be relevant for this assessment.

Up to date?

The information that is published online (only regarding annual total amount of payments for

fishing from large-scale vessels) is seen as up to date.

Easy to find?

The information on payments provided by MoBE and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning

and Development is considered easy to find.

5-C | CATCHES WITHIN MAURITIAN WATERS

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

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

Available online?

The only report issued by the government that provides details on *catches made by large-scale and semi-industrial fisheries* is the annual report. However, the data found in these reports is limited, ambiguous and inconsistent.

The latest annual report from 2021 provides general information on the *volume of fish 'produced' for the previous year* described under the categories of 'coastal fisheries', 'FAD fisheries', 'Pelagic fisheries' and 'offshore demersal fisheries'. The latter two categories are relevant to large-scale and semi-industrial fisheries. However, the volume of fish produced by pelagic fisheries is misleading and does not include catches made by foreign-flagged vessels. The figure published by the MoBE only corresponds to catches made by purse seine and long-line fishing vessels that are flagged to Mauritius (as evident in the reports of its national fishing fleet issued to the IOTC).

In the previous annual report, for the year 2020, information on catches was provided for:

- Mauritius-flagged purse seine vessels (3 vessels, catches = 25,212 tonnes of tuna)
- Mauritius-flagged long line vessels (11 vessels, catches = 513.8 tonnes of swordfish and tuna) species; no breakdown for species. Also included catches made outside of the EEZ).
- Foreign-flagged longline vessels (number of vessels not specified, catches = 10,155 tonnes, no species specified).
- Banks fishery (2 vessels, catches = 478.5 tonnes but no species specified)
- St Brandon Fishery (16 vessels, catches = 289 tonnes, but no species specified)
- Semi-industrial chilled fishery (21 vessels, catches = 558.7, but no species specified)
- Deep water snapper/grouper fishery (11 vessels, catches = 441.1 tonnes, but no species specified).

Notably absent from this list were the catches of tuna made by foreign-flagged purse seine vessels.

Other reports provide more granular

information. The [annual reports provided by the Government of Mauritius to the IOTC](#) provide more detailed data on catches made by large-scale purse seine and semi-industrial long-lined Mauritius-flagged vessels in Mauritian waters, on the High Seas and in other country's waters. However, as this information is only published in technical (and hard to find) reports on the website of the IOTC, it is not included in the scoring of this assessment. However, this does indicate that the national authorities compile detailed catch data and could publish

this in their own reports if they chose to do so.

A look at the Fisheries Research chapter of previous annual reports from 2003 to 2011 shows that far more detailed information on catches used to be provided. In the mid 1990s [a research report published by the Albion Fisheries Research Center](#) also provided in-depth assessment of catches from the banks fisheries, including analysis of fishing effort. However, this information is too old to be considered relevant for this assessment.

Up to date?

While information on catches made in Mauritius' waters provided in the annual report is considered to be up to date, more complete

information on catches is provided in older reports, yet this information is seen to be outdated.

Easy to find?

Information on catches is only partially easy to find as locating the information requires reading

through multiple reports produced by the MoBE.

5-D | CATCHES OUTSIDE MAURITIAN WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(Published data comprises previous calendar year)</i>	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded retained catches by Mauritius-flagged vessels	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 fishing area (i.e. High Seas and third country)			
No			

Available online?

The government of Mauritius does not publish data on catches by its flagged fishing vessels outside of the country's waters. However, this information is included in the [annual reports provided by the Government of Mauritius to the](#)

[IOTC](#). As this information is only published in technical (and hard to find) reports on the website of the IOTC, it is not included in the scoring of this assessment.

5-E | LANDINGS IN MAURITIAN 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 Mauritian ports of fish caught in Mauritian waters	No		
Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisation or gear type			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessels			
No			

Available online?

The government of Mauritius does not publish data on landings of fish caught in its waters from large-scale or semi-industrial vessels. This data used to be included in the annual reports from 2003-2011 but is no longer published. It should be noted that a large amount of fish is

landed in Port Louis to supply the tuna canning factories, although the majority of this is caught outside of the EEZ of Mauritius. Total volumes of frozen tuna landed in Mauritius is included in the annual report of the MoBE, but without indicating where this fish was caught.

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 Mauritian 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?

Under the Marine Resources and Fisheries Act 2007, transshipment at sea is permitted upon receiving permission from the Permanent Secretary. Information on the total quantities of fish transshipped through Mauritius is provided in the last annual report issued by the MoBE. This further distinguishes between quantities of (i) Pelagic fish (Tuna and tuna-like) and (ii)

Patagonian toothfish. However, the data does not indicate where the fish was caught. It should be noted that the majority of the tuna will have been caught outside of the EEZ of Mauritius, and all of the toothfish. However, it is not possible to find data on the quantities of fish caught in the waters of Mauritius that were subsequently transshipped in port or at sea.

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 Mauritian 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?

The government of Mauritius does not publish data on discards made by fishing vessels authorised to fish in its waters. However, this information for Mauritius-flagged vessels is included in the [annual reports provided by the](#)

[Government of Mauritius to the IOTC](#). As this information is only published in technical (and hard to find) reports on the website of the IOTC, it is not included in the scoring of this assessment.

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			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessels			
	No		

The government of Mauritius does not publish data on fishing effort made by fishing vessels authorised to fish in its waters. However, this information for Mauritius-flagged vessels is included in the [annual reports provided by the Government of Mauritius to the IOTC](#). As this information is only published in technical (and hard to find) reports on the website of the IOTC, it is not included in the scoring of this

assessment.

Information on the number of fishing days for Mauritius-flagged vessels and semi-industrial fishing vessels was included in the annual reports from 2003-2011. However, this information is considered too old to be included for this assessment



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.²⁵

Although several terms are used in Mauritius that approximate small-scale fisheries, government authorities tend to refer to artisanal coastal fisheries. The following analysis is limited to this coastal artisanal fishery and does not include fisheries related to the banks fisheries.

In some government publications, the FAD fishery is treated separately from artisanal coastal fisheries. However, the reason for that distinction is unclear. Here it is considered a sub-category of fishing under the small-scale sector.

Recent data on artisanal fisheries in Mauritius

appears not to include data from Rodrigues. The reason for this omission is not clear, but may be due to the semi-autonomous status afforded to the island in 2001. However, it is an important omission given that coastal artisanal fisheries in Rodrigues, which remain a constituent of Mauritius and whose residents are Mauritius citizens, are significant and the Commission responsible for fisheries in Rodrigues does not publish its own reports. As such, all the published data on coastal small-scale fisheries must be seen as incomplete for Mauritius.

²⁵ 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>.

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	Partially	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by categories of fishing or gear types	No		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

Available online?

In the Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021 there is information on new fishing boats registered, as well as the total number of fishing boats registered by the Fisheries Protection Service (FPS). The report states that there were 2,728 boats registered with the authorities. It is assumed that this figure does not include boats operating in Rodrigues.

Furthermore, as the available information is not disaggregated by gear types or vessel characteristics, it is assumed that this total

number of fishing boats includes semi-industrial and industrial fishing vessels, as well as those involved in sports fishing. However, due to the ambiguity of this statistic, the assessment considers the information to be only partially available.

In previous annual reports dating back to 2003-2008, the number of vessels recorded by the government was disaggregated according to gear types and locations where the fishing took place. However, this data is considered too old to be included in this assessment.

Up to date?

The limited information is found that is found in the Annual Report on Performance for Financial

Year 2020-2021 is considered up to date.

Easy to find?

The limited information can be found easily as part of the achievements of the FPS in the

Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021.

6-B | LICENCES

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

Available online?

As described above, licences are required for specific gear types in Mauritius, and these are issued for a maximum of one year. There are,

however, no public records of how many licences in total or for different gear types are issued in the artisanal fisheries.

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			

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

Available online?

In recent annual reports a total number is given for artisanal fishers that have registered with the government to receive a fisher identity card. However, this information is not disaggregated by gender or type of occupation. It is also not clear if this figure includes fishers from Rodrigues.

It should be noted that not all people active in artisanal fishing have an identity card and it is not obligatory for some fishing using certain fishing gears, including those fishing by foot. Also, fishing identity cards are not renewed on an annual basis, and therefore some fishers who no longer fish may still be registered with the authorities. The total numbers of people with an identity card is therefore not a reliable indicator of the number of active fishers.

Additionally, the total number of fishers reported by the government seems unreliable. The numbers of registered fishers reported in the last annual report is 1,846. This can be compared to the number of registered vessels which is 2,728. It would seem unusual for a

country to have more fishing vessels than fishers, which points to the possibility that the data is not accurate. The [country fact file for Mauritius published by the FAO](#) states that in 2018 there were 28,898 people engaged in capture fisheries in the country, which is a global figure including those engaged in coastal small-scale fisheries, semi-industrial fisheries and large-scale fisheries. The FAO further state that 4% of fishers are women. However, it is not clear what the origin of this data is.

Confusion over the numbers of fishers active in Mauritius is evident in other publications. The UNDP's project "ecofish" that supports artisanal fisheries development in Mauritius states in its [project documents](#) from November 2021 that the total number of fishers in Mauritius is 1,900 and in Rodrigues it is 1,100. However, according to a report in 2012 produced by SmartFish, a programme funded by the European Union, [a survey conducted by the Ministry of Fisheries and Cooperatives in 2003](#) found that there were over 25,500 of 'amateur' fishers operating

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

regularly in the coastal fisheries. The report speculated that “It is likely that this figure has increased significantly”. The government survey referred to in this publication cannot be found online.

Previous annual reports (up to 2009) provided data on the number of registered fishers disaggregated according to the gear types used by fishers, including the category of fishing by foot (which would include many women

gleaners). However, this data is considered too old to be included in this assessment.

For this reason, the assessment considers the information on the total number of fishers to be largely incomplete. Information on registered fishers is published, but as registration is not compulsory it is a poor proxy to understand the number of people who engage in small-scale fisheries.

6-D | PAYMENTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <i>(Published data comprises previous calendar year)</i>	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?

This assessment found no government information on payments from the artisanal fisheries sector.

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	Partially	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by species	No		
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations and gear types	Partially	Yes	Yes
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

Available online?

In recent annual reports a total number is given for the catches of fish made by artisanal coastal fisheries. The figure is somewhat confusing as it includes both 'artisanal' and 'amateur' fishing, but the definition of amateur fishing is difficult to find.

Another statistic for FAD fisheries is provided.

It should be noted that the most recent annual reports do not seem to include catches of artisanal fisheries from Rodrigues. This information was published in the annual report for the year 2011, but it is excluded from subsequent years. This is significant as in 2011 annual catches from artisanal fisheries in Mauritius were less than those reported from Rodrigues.

No data in recent reports is provided for sports fisheries, although the government of Mauritius report to the IOTC that sports fishing results in

catches that are landed for human consumption of roughly 350 tonnes per year, more than the catches from FADs and nearly 40% of the catches reported for coastal artisanal fisheries. In 2006, government annual reports described that sports fishers caught on average 650 tonnes of fish each year, which is nearly double the figure reported to the IOTC for more recent times. This assessment was unable to find reasons for this decline in sports fishing in Mauritius. The disparity in government data may be caused by inaccurate estimates.

Catch data provided in the annual reports from 2003-2011 was far more detailed than is found in subsequent reports. For example, monthly catch data for the FAD fishery was published, including analysis on catch effort. However, again, this data is not included in this assessment as it is too old.

Up to date?

The limited information is found in the latest available annual report and is considered up to date.

Easy to find?

The limited information can be found easily as part of the achievements of the FPS in the Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021

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	Not applicable		
Disaggregated by species			
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations and gear types			
Not applicable			

Available online?

No information was found on discards from artisanal fisheries. This may reflect the fact that discards are very low to non-existent in coastal artisanal fisheries. Judging from similar fisheries within the region, for example Seychelles, the volume of discards in small-scale fisheries is generally seen as being insignificantly small.²⁷

Typically, the vast majority of fish caught are sold for human consumption. Fish that is not used for human consumption is usually used for other purposes such as bait or as food for domestic animals. Our assessment assumes therefore that discards are not applicable for Mauritius' small-scale fisheries.

²⁷ See the Seychelles' Report to the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI) for 2020: <https://www.sfa.sc/index.php/fisheries-report-other-document?task=download.send&id=165&catid=33&m=0>.



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	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by species and fish products	Partially	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by country of origin	No		
	To a large extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

Available online?

Information on imports of fishery products can be found in the Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021.

Under the Achievements of the Fisheries Division the total number of importers registered, permits issued and fish for

processing is described, including 82,057 tonnes of tuna and 697 tonnes of Barracouta. This figure is assumed to be the total quantity of imports of fish for processing. Information is also provided on fish and fish products imported for other reasons, including those

which have been frozen, and canned, with details of the total quantity imported and the quantity intended for immediate consumption. A separate table provides more details on product types, fish types (although not all

broken down by species) and the different amounts for each.

No information is provided on the country of origin.

Up to date?

The information on imports is considered to be

up to date.

Easy to find?

The information available is considered easy to find in the Annual Report on Performance for

Financial Year 2020-2021.

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	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by species and fish products	Partially	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by country of destination	No		
	To a large extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

Available online?

Information on the total quantity of fish exports is also published in the Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021. As with imports, this data is presented as part of the achievements of the Fisheries Division with

details of the total quantity of fish and fish products exported, which amounts to 82,780 tonnes in total. Other details are also included, such as the number of registered exporters, and the number of export permits granted.

The information provided on the fish species exported is limited. Only tuna and snoek are referenced specifically, with other species being

reported as generic frozen fish. In addition, no information is provided on the country of destination.

Up to date?

The information available on exports is considered to up to date.

Easy to find?

The information on exports in considered to be easy to find in the Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021.

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?

The Annual Report on Performance for the Financial Year 2020-2021 provides limited information on the number of people involved in the commercial fishing industry. Some information is provided on the number of licences issued for fish importers and exporters, the total number of registered traders and the

number of registered fishmongers. However, there is no comprehensive information provided for employment in the post-harvest sector.

Household censuses are periodically carried out in Mauritius to assess the state of the population and employment. These are

produced by Mauritius Statistics, a department of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development. The [most recent survey on economic activities](#) in Mauritius was conducted in 2018. This is divided between small enterprises (those employing less than 10 people) and large enterprises. The survey on small enterprises provides limited data for fisheries, as economic activities related to the selling of fish were combined under one heading for activities relating to the production of fish and meat. For [large enterprises](#) a data category was included for processing of fish,

which indicated there were 10 businesses involved employing 4,782 people.

The [latest housing and population survey](#) was conducted in 2011. This included a data field for people employed in fishing and aquaculture. It is therefore not possible to determine the numbers of people engaged in marine fishing exclusively. This census also did not capture data on the post-harvest fisheries sector. A generic category was used for people employed in food manufacturing.

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	Not produced		
Disaggregated by gender			
Disaggregated by sub-sectors			
Not produced			

Available online?

There are no recent estimates of the number of people engaged in the fisheries sector on an informal basis, despite strong evidence that many people catching and supplying fish for local markets are not formerly registered with the government. A reference was found for a government survey undertaken in 2003 that

estimated the number of fishers that were not registered with the government (see 6-C above). However this survey could not be found. It is assumed that since then no government studies have been produced on the informal fisheries sector.



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	Partially	Yes	Partially
Financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with national legislation	Partially	Yes	No
Total numbers of inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in ports	Yes	Yes	Partially
	To a large extent	To a full extent	To a limited extent

Available online?

The national authorities in Mauritius publish some details online regarding the application of laws in the fisheries sector. The NPOA-IUU establishes the mechanisms in place to combat

IUU fishing, such as the use of the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) by the Fishery Monitoring Centre (FMC) to track the activities of vessels at sea according to [Fisheries and Marine](#)

[Resources \(Vessel Monitoring System\) Regulations 2005](#). In line with these regulations, all local and foreign fishing vessels must transmit VMS information every two hours to the FMC or that of their respective country. Another activity defined in this plan is the monitoring of fish landings and transshipments by the Port State Control Unit (PSCU). Both these activities are further described directly on the website of the MoBE, on the page 'Monitoring Control Surveillance/Vessel Monitoring System/Port State Control and Import-Export Division'

Additionally, the Merchant Shipping (Safety of Fishing Vessels) Regulations 2000 describes some control activities for the sector, including inspections that must be carried out for a

fishing vessel to be licenced. These mandatory inspections are announced in [circulars](#), which are then published on the 'Merchant Shipping Notices' page on the website of the MoBE.

The number of inspections carried out in fishing vessels and in the post-harvest sector can be found in the Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021. The numbers of vessels boarded and inspected by the Fisheries Division are shown as follows: 312 domestic fishing vessels and 450 foreign fishing vessels. The numbers of vessels boarded and inspected by the Shipping Division are indicated as follows: 70 vessel inspections.

When it comes to the resources mobilised, only details on human resources are given.

Up to date?

The available information on enforcement of laws is considered to be up to date. It must be noted, however, that the NPOA-IUU was drafted in 2010 and the strategies were developed

based on publications/information obtained from earlier years. It may be possible that a review of these activities are now required.

Easy to find?

Information related to the enforcement of laws in the fisheries sector is not easy to find, as it

requires consulting several documents. No comprehensive information is yet provided.

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	Partially	Yes	Yes
Name of the company or vessel owner, the nature of the offence and the penalty imposed	No		
Nature of the offence	No		
Penalty imposed	Partially	Yes	Partially
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a large extent

Available online?

The Annual Report on Performance for Financial Year 2020-2021 provides only limited information on sanctions imposed for major offences in the fisheries sector. These statistics are included as part of the achievements of FPS, and include the number of cases that were prosecuted, and the sanctions imposed on

offenders, such as the amount of fishing gears seized. Although there is no clear information on the accused and the nature of the offence, the penalties imposed are provided as a total sum. However, this information appears to relate only to activities at sea and not to the post-harvest sector.

Up to date?

The available information on sanctions imposed

in the fisheries sector is considered up to date.

Easy to find?

The available information on sanctions imposed in the fisheries sector is easy to find in the Annual Report on Performance for Financial

Year 2020-2021. However, the limited information available on penalties imposed is considered somewhat difficult to find.



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.

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	Partially	Yes	Yes
Financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with labour standards	No		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

Available online?

Labour standards are covered in the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005* – the main legal instrument establishing welfare in the workplace. The Act, which is [published on the website of the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training](#), expressly

states that it encompasses all the different sectors, including fisheries, with fishing vessels being recognised as a place of work. Thus, the guidelines are valid for the fisheries sector inclusive of the post-harvest sector. However, this legislation does not contain additional

regulations that would be more applicable to the sector. Still, some, albeit limited, information is available regarding the application of labour standards within the fisheries sector.

The Mauritius Ports Authority provides on its website a page for 'policy documents' with details on the application of the ILO Occupational Safety & Health Management system 2001 and the Occupational Safety & Health Act 2005 to ensure that working conditions are maintained when the employees of a fishing vessel and the post-harvest sector are in the port located in Port Louis.

Information on measures that must be implemented to ensure the welfare of fishermen at sea can be found in the Merchant Shipping Act 2007, although this text seems to refer to industrial vessels that make long voyages at sea. 'Chapter 5: Engagement, Discharge and Welfare

of Seamen' provides some guidelines on ensuring the health, wage and nutritional needs of employees of a fishing vessel are met, and on complying with the minimum age for recruitment. The standards set out in this Act are mainly implemented through two regulations: the Merchant Shipping (Safety of Fishing Vessels) Regulations and the Merchant Shipping (Seamen's Code) Regulations.

However, no further details are available on efforts deployed to implement these measures, or their outcomes. This is seen also when it comes to the issuance of regular circulars that inform ships of the latest safety requirements for seafarers by MoBE. Although these notices are then published online there are no further details on what is done to ensure that the guidelines are enforced.

Up to date?

Information on the application of labour standards in the fisheries sector is considered up to date as it is contained in the most recent

laws produced by the national authorities of Mauritius

Easy to find?

Information on the application of labour standards in the fisheries sector is considered relatively easy to find. The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2005 is available on the website of the Ministry of Labour, Human Resources Development and Training, and information on the application of this Act can be found on the

first pages. Similarly, information found on the Mauritius Ports Authority website can be easily located in the occupational health and safety policies section. This section is located at the beginning of the menu containing information about the authority as a whole. However, when it comes to finding information in the Merchant

Shipping Act 2007 and its accompanying regulations, it requires reading through a

number of pages to find the information.

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?

Our assessment found no information on labour standards violations published by the government. The Ministry of Labour, Human Resources Development and Training publishes an annual report dated from 2013 to 2019 which

details cases brought to court for non-compliance with occupational safety and health regulations. However, these cases are not specified by sector.



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.²⁸

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	Partially	Yes	No
Disaggregated by type/purpose	No		
Disaggregated by recipient	No		
Average annual value of any fuel subsidies per unit of fuel (in nominal and percentage terms)	Not applicable		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	No

Available online?

The government of Mauritius provides various different types of subsidies to the fisheries sector. This includes capacity-enhancing

subsidies (financial assistance for buying vessels and engines), as well as subsidies to compensate fishers for loss of incomes. The

²⁸ 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>

government also provides indirect subsidies to the fisheries sector, including tax exemptions for vessels in the banks fisheries.

Prominent subsidy programmes in Mauritius include:

- The installation of FADs for coastal fisheries; introduced in 1985 to reduce pressure on heavily exploited lagoons, around 2 million Mauritian rupees is spent to maintain this type of fishery which aims to relocate artisanal fishermen to the open sea.²⁹
- Financial incentives for the purchase of Canotte vessels; the government provides 200,000 rupees for each person who purchases these new fiberglass boats designed for fishing beyond the lagoons.
- The semi-industrial fisheries scheme; information is limited but this involves financial support for the purchase of semi-industrial vessels for the banks fisheries.
- Compensation for 'bad weather days' for fishers.

Published information on the value and purpose of subsidies in the fisheries sector is somewhat hard to understand. In recent annual reports published by the MoBE a total figure for subsidies is provided in a table detailing the Ministry's annual expenditures on the ocean economy. In 2020, for example, this total was 332,100 Rupees. However, it is not clear what government transfers this covers, and whether

this is separate to subsidies in the fisheries sector (which seems likely). This figure does not include the money spent on the canotte programme or the semi-industrial programmes. In his annual budget speech of 2021, the Minister described that the annual expenditure on supporting the semi-industrial scheme was 12 million rupees and the canotte fishery was 4 million. In a press release, dated November 2021, the Minister also described that the canotte scheme had disbursed over 15 million rupees since it was launched.

Although the MoBE presents a total sum for subsidies, information in the latest annual report suggests transfers for capacity building are actually categorised as "other expenses" in the annual budget for fisheries, which amounted to over 10 million rupees. However, it is difficult to know what this covers. Information on the government subsidy for FADs could not be found. There are also no reports on the value of indirect subsidies.

In general, while the government provides some information on subsidies, there is a lack of detail on what is the precise value of these transfers (both direct and indirect). The financial statements provided in the annual reports do not provide clear information. To what extent the MoBE has clarified its definition of a fisheries subsidy is also unclear. Indeed, the expenditure on the FADs fishery does not seem to be presented as a subsidy.

²⁹ See: http://download.govmu.org/files/2018/P04_Artinal_Fishery.pdf

Up to date?

The available information is considered to be up to date.

Easy to find?

The limited information that is published regarding subsidies is hard to find for a layperson, as it is not presented in Annual

Reports as a subsidy, even though there is a sub-category in the financial reports of the MoBE for subsidies.



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 public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation in Mauritius, funded by bilateral, multilateral and private donors	No		
Project value			
Project purpose and outputs			
Project evaluations			
	No		

Available online?

The website of the MoBE contains a standalone link that leads to a page titled '[Cooperation with Regional or International Agencies](#)' which contains links to international agencies that the Ministry has collaborated with or is a member of. This page is divided into two

sections; the first part is on fisheries and the other is on shipping. The section for fisheries features a list of six organisations. Only the first two organisations - the Indian Ocean Commission (COI) and the JICA/OFCF (Japan) - lead to pages that detail development

assistance given to Mauritius. However, the information is too old to be considered relevant for this assessment. For example, the page for the COI presents details of the ‘Indian Ocean Commission Regional Coral Reef Monitoring Project’ which was implemented between 2003 and 2005.

Published information from non-governmental organisations indicates that Mauritius does have development aid initiatives that are active for the fisheries sector but are not published on government websites. It is possible that other projects exist for which development assistance is provided but only the examples below were retrieved.

- To promote a sustainable ecosystem along coastal areas, a *“Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Management of Coastal Zone” project worth USD 4.6 million* is currently being funded by GEF and UNDP. There is no

information on this project provided by the MoBE but the [website of the GEF](#) lists MOI (with the support of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly) as the main executing body for this project. It was not possible to find information related to this project on the websites of either of these entities.

- In 2020, the E€OFISH project *‘Supporting the economic empowerment of the artisanal fishing community of the Republic of Mauritius’ worth 1 million euros* was launched by MoBE and UNDP. The project aims to train fishers on how to make use of best fishing practices, including modern techniques and facilities (FADs) for off-lagoon fishing. Information on this project is [provided by the UNDP only](#).

Therefore, our assessment considers information on official development assistance as largely incomplete in Mauritius.

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 public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation in foreign countries, funded by the Mauritian government	Not applicable		
Project value			
Project purpose and outputs			
Project evaluations			
Not applicable			

Available online?

The government of Mauritius does not provide official development assistance for the fisheries

sector of foreign countries.



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 licences 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.³⁰

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 Mauritius	Yes	Yes	Partially
Mauritius' legal definition of beneficial ownership	Yes	Yes	Yes
Thresholds used to determine when ownership and control is disclosed	No		
Disclosure exceptions	No		
	To a large extent	To a full extent	To a large extent

Available online?

The legal basis for beneficial ownership transparency is established in the Financial Intelligence and [Anti-Money Laundering Act](#)

[2002](#) published online by the Bank of Mauritius (BoM), although this Act seems more geared towards the banking and business sector. The

³⁰ 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>

definition for a 'beneficial owner' is provided as follows:

- “(a) means the natural person –
- (i) who ultimately owns or controls a customer;
- (ii) on whose behalf a transaction is being conducted; and
- (b) includes those natural persons who exercise

ultimate control over a legal person or arrangement and such other persons as may be prescribed.”

However, the Act does not make any provisions for the thresholds used to determine ownership or where possible exceptions to disclosure exist.

Up to date?

The available information pertaining to beneficial ownership is considered up to date as

it is contained the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2002.

Easy to find?

The Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2002 is not considered easy to find on the website of BoM. It was not possible to locate the document by searching through the menu. The Act could only be retrieved either

by conducting a search on the website of BoM or through a search engine, for example Google. Once the document is accessed it is relatively easy to find the definition of beneficial ownership within the first few pages of the Act.

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?

As part of the [Open Ownership](#) programme, the government of Mauritius has committed to establishing a central register of beneficial owners, although the commitment does not extend to making the register available to the public. Our assessment found no evidence that

this commitment has been implemented yet. Once the register is established, a step further towards beneficial ownership transparency for the government of Mauritius would be to allow access by the public to the register.

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?

Our assessment found no evidence that the national authorities of Mauritius provide, or are working towards the establishment, of specific

procedures to integrate beneficial ownership into fisheries rules and regulations.



TAKING STOCK

**Online Transparency of Fisheries
Management Information**



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