

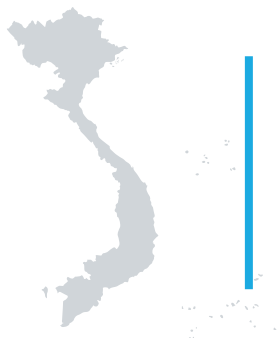


Fisheries  
Transparency  
Initiative

# TAKING STOCK

## Online Transparency of Fisheries Management information

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**Socialist Republic  
of Viet Nam**

**2024 Detailed Assessment Report**

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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 Viet Nam's national authorities publish on government websites regarding the country's marine fisheries sector.

## **The Viet Nam 2024 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: [fiti.global/taking-stock](https://fiti.global/taking-stock)

<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DIGITAL LANDSCAPE OF THE MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR IN VIET NAM</b>	<b>5</b>
NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT	5
NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITIES	6
GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AND NOTABLE REPORTS	7
<b>DETAILED ASSESSMENT: ONLINE TRANSPARENCY OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT INFORMATION IN VIET NAM</b>	<b>9</b>
FISHERIES LAWS, REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS	11
FISHERIES TENURE ARRANGEMENTS	19
FOREIGN FISHING ACCESS AGREEMENTS	24
STATUS OF FISHERIES RESOURCES	27
LARGE-SCALE FISHERIES	30
SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES	38
POST-HARVEST SECTOR AND FISH TRADE	44
FISHERIES LAW ENFORCEMENT	49
LABOUR STANDARDS	53
FISHERIES SUBSIDIES	55
OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE	57
BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP	59

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>DANIDA</b>	Denmark's International Development Cooperation
<b>DOF</b>	Department of Fisheries
<b>EEZ</b>	Exclusive Economic Zone
<b>EITI</b>	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FIP</b>	Fisheries Improvement Project
<b>FiTI</b>	Fisheries Transparency Initiative
<b>GSO</b>	General Statistical Office
<b>IIED</b>	International Institute for Environment and Development
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IUU</b>	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
<b>MARD</b>	Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>MONRE</b>	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>NSC</b>	National Steering Committee
<b>NRAF</b>	National Rural, Agricultural and Fishery
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OGP</b>	Open Government Partnership
<b>RIMF</b>	Vietnamese Research Institute for Marine Fisheries
<b>SEAFDC</b>	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center
<b>UNHRC</b>	United Nations Human Rights Committee
<b>USAID</b>	U.S. Agency for International Development
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>VASEP</b>	Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers
<b>VIFEP</b>	Viet Nam Institute for Fisheries Economics and Planning
<b>VMS</b>	Vessels Monitoring System
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organisation
<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Fund

# DIGITAL LANDSCAPE OF VIET NAM'S MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR<sup>1</sup>

## NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

Although Viet Nam's government has made public commitments towards Open Government, progress has been limited. In 2016, Viet Nam enacted the Law on Access to Information, which provided some rights to citizens to access government information.<sup>2</sup> However, the law is restrictive. In 2021, the government launched a National Digital Transformation Programme with ambitious targets to digitise government-held information, increase citizens' access to the internet, and migrate more government services online. In 2023, the Ministry of Information and Communication also declared that year to be the Year of National Digital Data.<sup>3</sup>

Despite official commitments to improve public access to government information, Viet Nam has gained international attention for its deteriorating stance towards freedom of speech. Several laws have been used to suppress transparency and the rights of citizens to express opinions on government matters. The National Socio-Economic Plan for Viet Nam for 2022 has a goal (number 12) entitled "Promote information dissemination, improve the effectiveness of mass mobilization and creation of social consensus".<sup>4</sup> However, this elaborates on the government's approach by declaring that the government will "demolish, remove, and prevent untrue, bad, and malicious information". In a submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) on 24 March 2024, the NGOs Legal Initiatives for Viet Nam, Article 19, and Open Net raised serious concerns about the criminalisation of freedom of speech and the frequency in which bloggers and journalists in Viet Nam have been imprisoned.<sup>5</sup> In 2023, Viet Nam was ranked 178th of 180 countries by Reporters without Borders.<sup>6</sup>

Although Viet Nam was invited to join the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and was the focus of an assessment by the OGP in 2019, it is not a member. It is also not a participating country in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

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[1] This section is intended to provide a brief introduction to the overarching framework through which the Vietnam 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.

[2] An English translation is available at: <https://www.rti-rating.org/wp-content/uploads/Vietnam.pdf>

[3] <https://opengovasia.com/2023/06/19/vietnam-unleashing-the-power-of-open-data/>

[4] <https://vietnam.gov.vn/socio-economic-development-plans/socio-economic-development-plan-for-2022-12067464>

[5] This submission is available on the website of Article 19: <https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Vietnam-L01-Submission-CCPR-08Jan2024.pdf>

[6] The country report for Vietnam by Reporters Without Borders is available at: <https://rsf.org/en/country/vietnam>

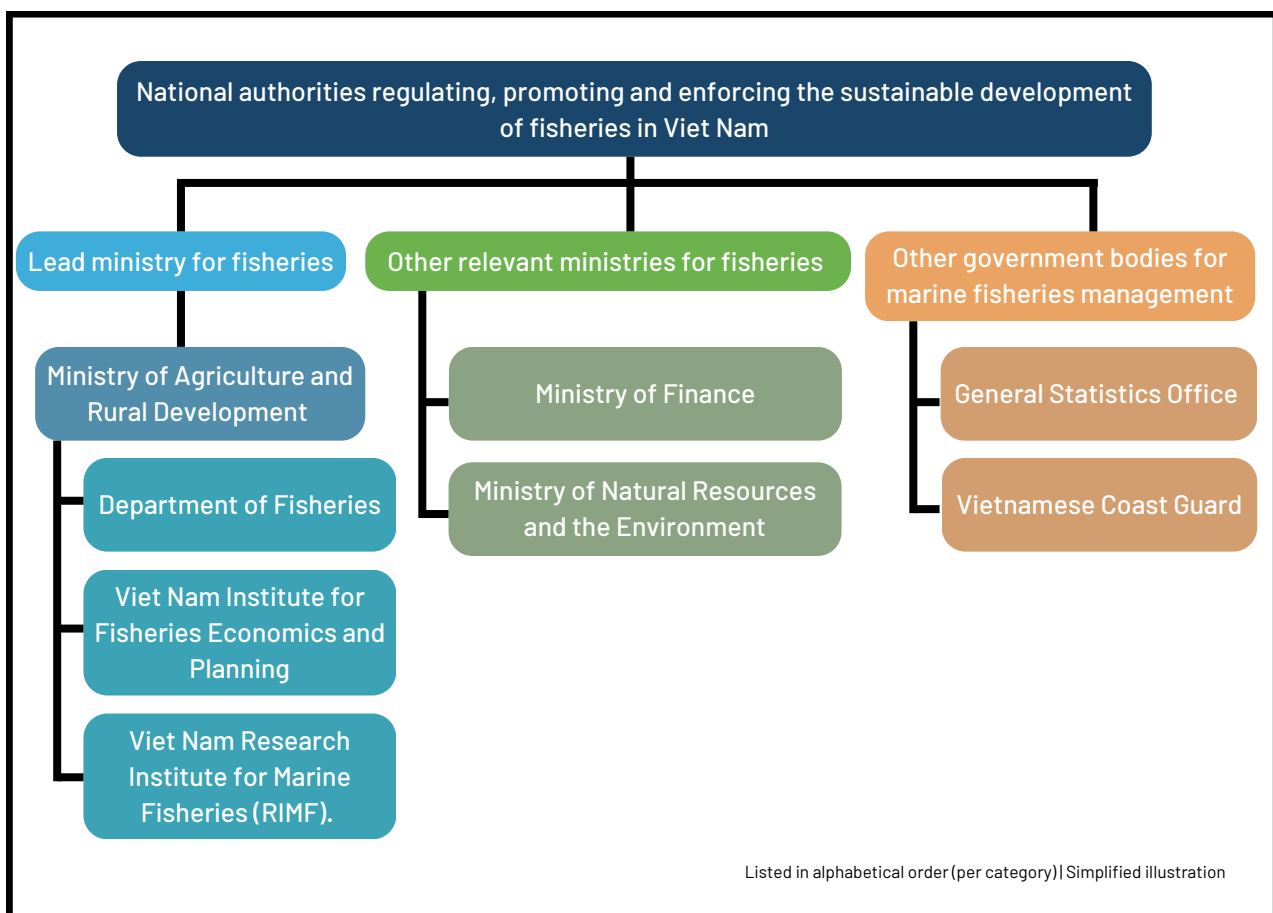


## NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITIES

The primary national authority tasked with managing marine fisheries is the **Department of Fisheries (DOF)**. This is a department within the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Other departments within the Ministry include the **Viet Nam Institute for Fisheries Economics and Planning (IFEP)** and the **Viet Nam Research Institute for Marine Fisheries (RIMF)**.

Over the past decade, the governance of fisheries in Viet Nam has undergone a process of devolution, whereby provincial/district authorities have greater autonomy in managing fisheries. Each province has a MARD department. This assessment could not fully understand how devolved power from the central government to provincial governments works in practice, and there is little up-to-date analysis of this provided in government reports and academic literature.

Several other Ministries have responsibilities that directly influence the marine fisheries sector. This includes the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE), which has a department for the Administration of the Sea and Islands. The Vietnamese Coast Guard, situated under the Ministry of National Defence, is also a primary government organisation that enforces fisheries laws.



## GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AND NOTABLE REPORTS

In Viet Nam, there is a central portal for government information [[www.vietnam.gov.vn](http://www.vietnam.gov.vn)]. This provides weblinks to most other government websites operated by ministries. MARD has its own website [[www.mard.gov.vn](http://www.mard.gov.vn)], and so does the DOF [[www.tongcucthuysan.gov.vn](http://www.tongcucthuysan.gov.vn)]. These websites do not follow a similar design for content and navigation, and this research found it somewhat difficult to search and find specific information. Furthermore, several government websites assessed for this report are unstable, with pages not loading and content appearing to be missing. For example, the 'Administration of the Sea and Islands' web pages have no content.

For this assessment, the DOF website was considered the primary entry point for searching for information on fisheries. This has content in both Vietnamese and English, although the Vietnamese content is more substantial and is updated more regularly. This website is based on news stories and press releases issued by the DOF. These articles are saved in a searchable database, and the home page provides thematic headings that group articles.

What is unusual about the DOF **is a lack of annual reports**. This assessment could not locate annual statistical reports produced by the DOF. There is a link on the DOF website (found via the sitemap only) to a fisheries statistic database called **VNFishbase**. However, access to this database is currently restricted by a password. This statistical information is, therefore, not public. Summary data on the fisheries sector is provided by the **General Statistics Office** on its website [[www.gso.gov.vn](http://www.gso.gov.vn)], although there are no links to this information from the DOF website.

The VIFEP has its own website [[www.vifep.com.vn](http://www.vifep.com.vn)], as does the RIMF [[www.rimf.org.vn](http://www.rimf.org.vn)]. Again, neither of these websites links to the DOF website, and neither are official government websites (both lack the URL address of '.gov'). The RIMF website became inaccessible during the period when research for this assessment was being undertaken.

Finally, it should be noted that the Vietnamese Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) website provides significant information derived from the government, including, for example, a registry of selected laws and regulations and annual reports on seafood production and trade. This website has been useful in undertaking the research for this assessment, although it is not considered government information.



## CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PORTAL

Viet Nam Central Government Portal

[www.vietnam.gov.vn](http://www.vietnam.gov.vn)

## WEBSITES OF DEPARTMENTS RELEVANT FOR VIET NAM'S MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

[www.mard.gov.vn](http://www.mard.gov.vn)

Department of Fisheries

[www.tongcucthuysan.gov.vn](http://www.tongcucthuysan.gov.vn)

Vietnamese Institute of Fisheries Economics and Planning

[www.vifep.com.vn](http://www.vifep.com.vn)

Vietnamese Research Institute for Marine Fisheries

[www.rimf.org.vn](http://www.rimf.org.vn)

## WEBSITES OF OTHER GOVERNMENT BODIES RELEVANT FOR VIET NAM'S MARINE FISHERIES SECTOR

General Statistics Office

[www.gso.gov.vn](http://www.gso.gov.vn)

Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment

[www.monre.gov.vn](http://www.monre.gov.vn)

Vietnamese Coast Guard

Ministry of Finance

[www.mof.gov.vn](http://www.mof.gov.vn)

## DETAILED ASSESSMENT: ONLINE TRANSPARENCY OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT INFORMATION IN VIET NAM

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.<sup>7</sup> 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**.<sup>8</sup> These 12 thematic areas have been further broken down into a total of 39 transparency elements.

The following Detailed Assessment Report provides explanations for the 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.<sup>9</sup>

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

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[7] 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.

[8] 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.

[9] 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 Viet Nam, 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 <sup>10</sup>	Yes	Yes	No
	To a full extent	To a full extent	No

### Available online

The primary law governing marine fisheries in Viet Nam is the Fisheries Law of 2017 (18/2017:QH14). The regulation for implementing the law was published in 2019 (26-2019: ND-CP). However, there is an extensive list of other laws and regulations covering many aspects of the fisheries sector, including Ministerial Circulars (decrees) and Official Dispatches, which provide clarification or amendments to regulations. A search on the official gazette of Viet Nam for 'fisheries' brings up 202 results for separate pieces of legislation.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, rules and regulations governing fisheries can be produced at the provincial level through local people's committees, which are not in the official gazette.

[10] This assessment does not cover legislations at the sub-national level.

[11] <https://congbao.chinhphu.vn>

The extensive number of legal documents that regulate marine fisheries makes understanding the rules for fisheries in Viet Nam quite challenging. The Director of Fisheries does not provide a centralised database of laws nor a narrative of how laws have been developed and relate to each other. The Viet Nam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) have complained about the resulting regulatory confusion and has argued for legal clarification on certain issues relating to illegal fishing.<sup>12</sup>

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), through the FAO-Lex database, compile a list of Vietnamese fisheries laws. However, this list is not up to date and is incomplete.<sup>13</sup> Another online database of laws and regulations in Viet Nam is provided by the organisation “THƯ VIỆN PHÁP LUẬT”. This is a non-governmental organisation serving legal practitioners in Viet Nam. A keyword search for fisheries laws on their website returns over 1200 documents.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that the website of the Official Gazette might be incomplete. However, this assessment considers the Official Gazette to be likely complete, and the discrepancy with THƯ VIỆN PHÁP LUẬT is caused by anomalies in that website’s search function (many of the documents that are retrieved under the keyword search are not directly related to the fisheries sector).

### Up to date

Laws and regulations seem to be published via the online version of the official gazette promptly, meaning the available information can be considered up to date.

### Easy to find

The Directorate of Fisheries website is intuitive for finding fisheries laws. However, the organisation of information on this website makes this task difficult. There is no dedicated landing page for laws but rather a central database of documents that can be searched through keywords. This is a suboptimal approach as it requires people to know the name of a piece of legislation to find it. Even when articles are found with information on new laws, there is no link to an electronic copy of the law itself.

All national legislation is published online through the official gazette. Fisheries laws can be found through a keyword search. Results from the keyword search are arranged in chronological order. However, it is assumed that many of the legal documents have been superseded by others. It is, therefore, challenging for people to locate accessible information on the legal regime that applies to fisheries today.

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[12] <https://seafood.vasep.com.vn/combatiuu-fishing/vietnam-s-action-campaign/enterprises-want-clearer-regulations-on-seafood-production-30423.html>

[13] [https://www.fao.org/faolex/country\\_profiles/general\\_profile/see-more/en/](https://www.fao.org/faolex/country_profiles/general_profile/see-more/en/)

[14] <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/law-viet-nam/search-document.aspx?keyword=fisheries&area=0&match=True&type=0&status=0&signer=0&sort=1&lan=2&scan=0&fields=&org=0&page=10>

## 1-B | FISHERIES POLICY DOCUMENTS <sup>15</sup>

This assessment found it difficult to locate and understand national policy documents in Viet Nam related to the marine fisheries sector. This information is hard to locate because there is no guide for understanding the policy framework on any government or non-government website.

The government of Viet Nam has a complex approach to national policy development. There is a general social and economic planning system for the country as a whole and a planning system for specific sectors and thematic priorities, including fisheries. The most senior of all these policy documents is the **general socio-economic strategy document**, produced on a ten-year cycle. This sets out high-level objectives and targets across all sectors of society. Based on this 10-year strategy, the government produces **Master Plans** (also called action plans) that contain more specific information on how targets in the strategy will be achieved.<sup>16</sup> In addition to this, the government produces **five-year plans**<sup>17</sup> and then also **annual plans**. Five-year and annual plans include evidence of progress for the following period and are important documents for accountability.

At a sectoral level, a similar hierarchy of plans is used. At the national level, there are 10-year Strategies, a Master Plan, five-year plans and annual plans. Each province must also submit a ten-year Master Plan, five-year plans and annual plans. All policy documents state in the preamble what higher-level policies or laws they relate to. This information can help establish the relationship between policy documents and their origin in the planning process.

Research for this assessment has collated many policy documents that are related to the marine fisheries sector. Analysis of these suggests there are clusters of policy documents derived from overlapping themes.

- What seems to be the most prominent government policy document for the fisheries sector is “**Viet Nam's Fisheries Development Strategy to 2030, vision to 2045**” [Code: 339/QD-TTg]. This was released with the approval of the Prime Minister in March 2021. Several other policy documents have been released that are pursuant to this one.
- Alongside the fisheries development strategy to 2030, is the document entitled “Planning to protect and exploit aquatic resources in the period 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050”

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[15] 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.

[16] <https://asemconnectvietnam.gov.vn/default.aspx?ID1=2&ZID1=14&ID8=125352>

[17] <https://vietnam.gov.vn/socio-economic-development-plans/socio-economic-development-plan-for-2021-2025-12056314>

[Code:541/QĐ-TTg]. This was released with the approval of the Prime Minister on April 20, 2020.

- Although dealing with a set of issues that is broader than marine fisheries (but also inclusive of them), there is also the **“Strategy for Sustainable Development of Vietnam's Marine Economy to 2030 with a Vision to 2045”** [Code: 36-NQ/TW]. This was produced by the Communist Party of Vietnam on October 22nd 2018. Subsequent to this, in March 2020 the Communist Party released a 10-year Master Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Development of Vietnam’s Marine Economy to 2030, and the first five-year plan.
- Also addressing marine fisheries in the broader context of biodiversity conservation is the **National Strategy for Biodiversity until 2030, with a Vision to 2050** [Code 149/QĐ-TTg]. This was produced with the approval of the Prime Minister on January 28th, 2022.
- In 2017, the Prime Minister approved the **National Action Plan for the Implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** [Code 622/QĐ-TTg]. This includes action plans for SDG 14 (on oceans and fishing ).
- Finally, the government is set to produce the **National Marine Spatial Planning Strategy in 2024**. Reports suggest that by early June the text of the document had been finalised and approved by the government, although it is awaiting formal publication.

Numerous other policy documents have been produced in recent times. Most of these can be traced to the strategic documents noted above, although some are not explicitly linked to the implementation of strategies, but rather the implementation of specific laws, including the National Fisheries Law of 2017. The following is a list of other policy documents that were found for this assessment.

- Decision No. 78/QĐ-TTg dated 16/01/2018 on approval of National Plan of Action to Prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing toward 2025.
- Decision No. 1047/QĐ-TTg dated August 17, 2018 approving the Scheme to develop ocean fishing and send fishermen to fish marine products in some foreign waters.
- Decision No. 523/QĐ-TTg dated April 27, 2022 approving the Program on 5-year periodical overall survey and assessment of fisheries resources and habitats of aquatic species nationwide through 2030
- Decision No. 911/QĐ-TTg dated July 29, 2022 approving the Scheme on environmental protection in the Fisheries Sector in the 2021 - 2030.
- Decision 1090/QĐ-TTg dated Sep 19th, 2022 on approving the National Program for the Sustainable and Efficient Capture Fisheries Development: 2021 - 2030, with a Vision Towards 2050.
- Decision No. 81/QĐ-TTg dated February 13, 2023 promulgating the Plan of Action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and make preparations for the 4th working session with the European Commission’s Inspection Team.
- Decision No.208/QĐ- TTg dated 10 March 2023 approving the Scheme on the conversion of a number of fisheries negatively affecting fisheries resources, environment and ecosystems.



- Decision No. 613/QĐ-BNN-CCPT dated February 28, 2024 on promulgating an Action Plan for assurance of food quality and safety, increased processing and development of agriculture, forestry and fishery markets in 2024.

It should be appreciated that many of these national policy and planning documents form the basis of separate policy and planning documents produced at the provincial level.

As illustrated by this list, there is considerable complexity in understanding policy documents related to fisheries. What adds to this complexity is that different Ministries and government organisations are producing policy documents covering overlapping aspects of marine fisheries. There are also multiple layers to policy documents, as some are produced to implement others. Also, while the DOF is guided by the Strategy for Fisheries Development, the MARD also has several strategies that include fisheries within them. The result is confusing.

This situation would be less confusing if the various policy documents were consistent in their objectives and targets. However, an independent analysis of government planning in the fisheries sector published in 2017 shows that there are disparities between objectives and targets set at the national, sector and provincial levels.<sup>18</sup> While this assessment has not undertaken a detailed analysis of all of the policy documents, inconsistencies between them and policy incoherence more generally seem to exist. For example, the National Development Strategy for Fisheries has high-level objectives for growth in the production of marine fisheries and an increase in employment and fishers' incomes. The National Planning to Protect and Exploit Aquatic Resources has high-level objectives and targets of reducing the number of fishing vessels and lowering the pressure on marine fish populations. Similarly, various policy documents provide targets for establishing marine protected areas in Vietnam, but these targets are different.

This assessment has tried to locate the annual plans associated with several of the strategy documents listed above. However, none of these plans could be found. The only annual plan located by this assessment was the annual plan of MARD, which includes targets related to the reduction of fishing vessels. It is not clear why there are no published annual plans for other strategies, and this assessment assumes that they are treated as non-public documents.

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[18] [https://vbn.aau.dk/ws/files/549505379/PHD\\_Vu\\_Duyen\\_Hai\\_E\\_.pdf](https://vbn.aau.dk/ws/files/549505379/PHD_Vu_Duyen_Hai_E_.pdf)

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

## Available online

This assessment required considerable effort to locate policy and planning documents related to marine fisheries. There is no centralised list of these documents or any online information that helps explain how they relate to each other. Using keyword searches on the DOF website resulted in lists of articles that referred to policy and planning documents, but not all of them. It is possible to locate webpages with links to these documents if one knows the precise title or code for the document.

The central government website, [www.vietnam.gov.vn](http://www.vietnam.gov.vn) has a webpage (in English) with a list of sectoral policy documents, but does not include those relating to fisheries.<sup>19</sup> The Vietnamese version of this website, [chinhphu.vn](http://chinhphu.vn) does not display a list of sectoral policy documents.

Efforts to map policy documents on fisheries were based on Google searches using keywords, rather than relying on information provided by government websites. The research then 'snowballed' by finding references to other policy documents from within articles and the texts of policy documents themselves. The research also found a presentation online given by the DOF at a meeting organised by the FAO which summarised policy documents related to fisheries.<sup>20</sup> However, this did not contain all policy documents.

Having compiled a list of policy documents and their unique identifying codes, this assessment was able to locate the official texts of all policy documents on the central government website. All policy documents are uploaded to the catalogue of documents. Some of these documents can be found on the document database of MARD and the separate document database of DOF, but not all of them.

Policy documents related to fisheries are published by the government of Viet Nam. It is assumed that all documents authorised by the government are uploaded, although there is some doubt that strategic planning documents, including annual plans, are published.

[19] <https://vietnam.gov.vn/sectoral-development-strategies-70587>

[20] [https://v4.infofish.org/media/attachments/2023/10/19/viet--1710.23-vn-presentation\\_17-19-october-2023\\_latest.pdf](https://v4.infofish.org/media/attachments/2023/10/19/viet--1710.23-vn-presentation_17-19-october-2023_latest.pdf)

## Up to date

This assessment found no evidence of excessive delay in the publication of key policy documents. Therefore, it is assumed that what is published is up to date.

## Easy to find

The description of how this assessment located policy documents demonstrates that it is extremely difficult to find a comprehensive list of policy documents through government websites.

### 1-C | FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLANS <sup>21</sup>

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

## Available online

This assessment found it difficult to determine how frequently national and provincial authorities produce management plans for specific fisheries. Information on this could not be found on the website of the DOF. However, wider searches for information suggest that some fisheries management plans have been produced or are in the process of being produced. One example is the Tuna Fisheries Management Plan, which is listed as an achievement of a Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) for yellowfin tuna.<sup>22</sup> However, a digital copy of the Tuna Fisheries Management Plan could not be located on any website. A copy of a Tuna Fisheries Management Plan was located on the website of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, although this was dated 2012.<sup>23</sup> Information from the FIP suggests the latest version of the management plan was produced in 2018.

[21] 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.

[22] Details of the Yellow Fin Tuna Fisheries Improvement Project can be accessed from: <https://fisheryprogress.org>. Note this website is password protected, although anyone can generate a password. The weblink for the tuna FIP in Vietnam is: <https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/vietnam-yellowfin-tuna-longlinehandline>

[23] <https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/PLI-VNM-05-%5BConsultancy-report-%28Y3%29-National-Tuna-Management-Plan-June2012%5D.pdf>

In the FIP for Kien Gian Blue Swimming Crab, it is described that a fisheries management plan was produced and was updated in 2016.<sup>24</sup> This cannot be found online. The FIP for trawl fisheries in the Ba Ria - Vung Tau province also includes the production of a management plan as one of its main objectives, which is scheduled to be completed by July 2024.<sup>25</sup>

Management plans are also produced for Marine Protected Areas in Viet Nam. However, again, digital copies of these plans could not be found online.

For these reasons, this assessment considers that fisheries management plans are produced in Viet Nam, but it was not possible to locate them on national government websites.

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[24] <https://fisheryprogress.org/node/211/info>

[25] The workplan for this FIP can be accessed at: [https://fisheryprogress.org/system/files/documents\\_workplan/Fishery%20Progress%20Workplan%20Vietnam%20mixed%20species%20-%20trawl%20230222.pdf](https://fisheryprogress.org/system/files/documents_workplan/Fishery%20Progress%20Workplan%20Vietnam%20mixed%20species%20-%20trawl%20230222.pdf)



## 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 publicity, and even confidentiality. 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. \_\_\_\_\_

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

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Fees of access rights and fishing authorisations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duration of such rights and authorisations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transferability of such rights and authorisations	Not applicable		
Divisibility of such rights and authorisations	Not applicable		
Authorities/persons that are legally entitled to issue such rights and authorisations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mandatory administrative procedures required to determine their issue	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conditions relating to fishing effort	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conditions relating to ecosystem impact	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conditions relating to landings	No		

Conditions relating to transshipping	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conditions relating to catch reporting	Yes	Yes	Yes
Procedures and rules for authorising a Viet Nam flagged vessel to fish in a third country or on the High Seas	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nature of any oversight or public consultation processes	Not applicable		
	<b>To a full extent</b>	<b>To a full extent</b>	<b>To a full extent</b>

### Available online

This assessment was able to locate information on the rules and responsibilities of fisheries tenure for commercial fisheries in Viet Nam. This information is predominantly available in the 2017 Fisheries Law and subsequent regulations produced in 2019. The responsibility for establishing fees for commercial fisheries lies with the Ministry of Finance, and the fee structure for fisheries is clearly described in a government decree published in 2021.<sup>26</sup>

This assessment found no information on formal mechanisms for external oversight and public consultations of fisheries tenure decisions. It is assumed that such mechanisms do not exist, although further research is needed to verify this, and it is possible that such mechanisms exist at the provincial level, rather than at the level of the central government.

### Up to date

This assessment considers that the rules of fisheries tenure published on government websites are up to date.

### Easy to find

The 2017 fisheries law and subsequent regulations are easy to find on the government gazette.

[26] <https://lawnet.vn/vb/Thong-tu-94-2021-TT-BTC-muc-thu-quan-ly-va-su-dung-phi-dang-kiem-an-toan-ky-thuat-tau-ca-7875F.html>



## 2-B | COASTAL SUBSISTENCE FISHING

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	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		
Nature of any oversight or public consultation processes	Not produced		
<b>Not Produced</b>			

### Available online

This assessment could not find any government publications, laws, or policy documents that set out the rights of people in Viet Nam to subsistence fishing. Subsistence fishing is not mentioned in the 2017 fisheries law. However, numerous academic studies of the fisheries sector in Viet Nam describe that subsistence fishing is widespread. This assessment, therefore, considers information on tenure for subsistence to be not produced rather than not applicable.

## 2-C | SCIENTIFIC AND EXPLORATORY FISHING

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	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		
Nature of any oversight or public consultation processes	Not produced		
<b>Not Produced</b>			

### Available online

This assessment could not find any government publications, laws or policy documents that set out rules applicable to the authorisation of scientific or exploratory fishing. These are not terms found in the 2017 Fisheries law. It is difficult to establish if non-government organisations, including research institutes and commercial fishing companies, have been authorised to conduct fishing for scientific or exploratory purposes. Some evidence suggests this has occurred in the past. For example, a report produced in 2020 by academic staff at Can Tho University describes six scientific fishing surveys undertaken in 2018 and 2019, in collaboration with the DOF.<sup>27</sup> However, many countries provide legislation that regulates scientific and exploratory fishing for both public and private organisations. For this reason, this assessment considers information on this type of fishing to be not produced, as opposed to not applicable.

[27] Tran, D. et al, "An assessment of fisheries resources in the coastal water of the Mekong Delta, Vietnam", AACL Bioflux, 2020, Volume 13, Issue 6: <http://www.bioflux.com.ro/docs/2020.3683-3693.pdf>

## 2-D | SPORT FISHING

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	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		
Nature of any oversight or public consultation processes	Not produced		
<b>Not Produced</b>			

### Available online

This assessment could not find any government publications, laws or policy documents that set out rules applicable to the authorisation of recreational or sports fishing. These are not terms found in the 2017 Fisheries law. It is difficult to establish the size of the recreational fishing sector in Viet Nam, although one can find references to commercial sport fishing businesses online. It is assumed that many tourists in Viet Nam undertake sports fishing, and it could be an unregulated sector (without government fees and controls). For this reason, this assessment considers information on this type of fishing to be not produced, as opposed to not applicable.



### 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 party<sup>28</sup> that allows the foreign party's fishing vessels to operate in the coastal state's marine jurisdictional waters.<sup>29</sup> These agreements provide a contribution for the coastal state, including 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. \_\_\_\_\_

**This part of the assessment is not considered applicable to Viet Nam.** This assessment found no evidence that Viet Nam has signed a bilateral fisheries agreement allowing foreign fishing vessels access to its national waters, nor has it signed a bilateral agreement with a foreign country allowing Vietnamese-flagged vessels to operate in its waters. In the past, Viet Nam had a reciprocal fisheries agreement with China for fishing in shared waters. However, this agreement was not renewed in 2020.

The government of Viet Nam has expressed interest in facilitating Vietnamese fishing vessels operating in other countries' waters, and a strategy document for this was produced in 2018.<sup>30</sup> A press release published on the webpage of the DOF confirms that in 2022, Vietnamese authorities were exploring the possibility of signing a fisheries agreement with the government of Indonesia that would allow Vietnamese-flagged fishing vessels to fish in Indonesian waters through joint venture partnerships.<sup>31</sup> However, it is assumed that this agreement has not been concluded as no published evidence suggests otherwise.

[28] 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.

[29] Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone, in the following referred to as 'Viet Nam's waters'.

[30] Decision No. 1047/QĐ-TTg dated August 17, 2018 of the Prime Minister on approving the Scheme to develop ocean fishing and send fishermen to fish marine products in some foreign waters: <https://english.luatvietnam.vn/decision-no-1047-qd-ttg-dated-august-17-2018-of-the-prime-minister-on-approving-the-scheme-to-develop-ocean-fishing-and-send-fishermen-to-fish-marine-166289-doc1.html>

[31] <https://tongcucthuysan.gov.vn/en-us/capture-fisheries/fishing-vessel/doc-tin/020288/2024-01-31/negotiate-to-bring-vietnamese-vessels-fishing-in-indonesias-eez>

[Note: This assessment recognises that the EEZ of Viet Nam is disputed due to overlapping claims by China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia. No part of this assessment considers the transparency of government information on the ongoing disputes, although it has been alleged that fishers in Viet Nam have not been provided information on the outcome of bilateral agreements on EEZ boundaries with Indonesia.<sup>32</sup>]

### 3-A | AGREEMENTS ALLOWING FOREIGN-FLAGGED VESSELS TO FISH IN VIET NAM'S WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Signed contracts allowing foreign-flagged vessels to fish in Viet Nam waters	Not applicable		
Related documents, such as Memorandum of Understandings or amendments (if applicable)	Not applicable		
<b>Not Applicable</b>			

#### Available online

This assessment found no evidence that Viet Nam has signed a bilateral fisheries agreement allowing foreign fishing vessels access to its national waters.

### 3-B | AGREEMENTS ALLOWING CHINA FLAGGED VESSELS TO FISH IN THIRD COUNTRY WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Signed contracts allowing foreign-flagged vessels to fish in Viet Nam waters	Not applicable		
Related documents, such as Memorandum of Understandings or amendments (if applicable)	Not applicable		
<b>Not Applicable</b>			

[32] <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/southchinasea/vietnam-fishing-02172023015533.html>

## Available online

This assessment found no evidence that Viet Nam has signed a bilateral agreement with a foreign country allowing Vietnamese-flagged vessels to operate in its waters.





## 4. STATUS OF 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. However, without up-to-date and reliable information, both the health of the fish stock and trends in marine biodiversity are difficult to assess. Furthermore, information that is publicly available is often difficult to understand.

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

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
National reports on Viet Nam’s marine fish population, including at least the Top 5 commercial fish species	Not produced		
Information on trends in the state of stocks and explanations on the reasons for change	Not produced		
<b>Not Produced</b>			

#### Available online

This assessment located references to a study published by MONRE in 2021 entitled “The National Report on the Maritime and Insular Environment in the 2016 – 2020 period.” Descriptions of this study found in academic literature and news articles indicate that this report provided an in-depth analysis of marine biodiversity. However, this assessment could not find a copy of this report online, including on MONRE’s website.

Notably, in April 2022, the Prime Minister approved Decision No.523/QĐ-TTg, which required the Vietnamese government to undertake a survey and overall assessment of aquatic resources and

resources and habitats of aquatic species nationwide every five years until 2030.

Technical reports are produced by the Vietnamese Research Institute for Marine Fisheries staff and in collaboration with other research institutes.<sup>33</sup> Some of these summarise the trends in the health of fish populations in Viet Nam, although the RIMF does not produce regular reports on the state of marine fish populations on its own website. A report was published by the academic staff of Can Tho University in 2020, working in collaboration with the DOF, that provided a detailed assessment of fish populations in coastal waters.<sup>34</sup> This was based on scientific fishing expeditions undertaken in 2018 and 2019. However, the summary of this research was published in an academic journal, and can not be found online through government websites.

## 4-B | SCIENTIFIC STOCK ASSESSMENTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Scientific stock assessments	Partially	No	No
Information on the methods and data used to assess fish stocks	Partially	No	No
Information on ongoing or planned efforts to update and expand fish stock assessments	No	No	No
	To a limited extent	No	No

### Available online

Understanding the government research programme into fisheries stock assessments is somewhat hard. Since the mid-1990s, Vietnam has implemented programmes of fisheries surveys with funding assistance from Denmark’s development cooperation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (DANIDA). These were called the “Assessment of Living Marine Resources in Viet Nam projects”. The funding from DANIDA ended in the late 2000s. From 2012 to 2020 the national authorities then implemented a programme called the “Comprehensive Survey for Marine Fisheries Resources in Viet Nam”, which was funded through public money.<sup>35</sup>

[33] See, for example, Nguyen Viet Nghia and Vu Viet Ha (2021). Study on the trend of the marine fisheries resources in Vietnam in the period 2011-2020. Journal of Agricultural and Rural Development of Vietnam. Special Issue “Marine Fisheries Research”. [Note, this assessment only accessed an abstract]. <http://www.bioflux.com.ro/docs/2020.3683-3693.pdf>

[34] Tran, D. et al, “An assessment of fisheries resources in the coastal water of the Mekong Delta, Vietnam”, AACL Bioflux, 2020, Volume 13, Issue 6: <http://www.bioflux.com.ro/docs/2020.3683-3693.pdf>

[35] Ha, V. V. (2018). DISCUSSION ON MARINE CAPTURE FISHERIES SURVEY IN VIETNAM. Vietnam Journal of Marine Science and Technology, 18(1), 52-59. <https://doi.org/10.15625/1859-3097/18/1/8663>

RIMF is the national authority responsible for undertaking fish stock assessments in Viet Nam. RIMF's website contains links to several scientific papers summarising the results and methodologies used for some assessments.<sup>36</sup> However, there is no list or database of fish stock assessments in Viet Nam. This assessment found no government report providing information on a fish stock assessment schedule and planned studies for specific fisheries. *[Note, during the research for this assessment, due to the website of the RIMF being inaccessible, an in-depth search for stock assessment reports was not undertaken. Limited research was undertaken when the website was accessible.]*

This assessment reviewed stock assessments of fisheries undergoing FIPs in Viet Nam. Not all of these have been subject to stock assessments. For example, in the case of trawl fisheries in the Ba Ria - Vung Tau province, a rapid environmental assessment report published in 2021 described that stock assessments had not been undertaken for this fishery but is required for progressing with the FIP.<sup>37</sup> In the case of blue swimming crab, a stock assessment was undertaken in 2014 through a collaboration between RIMF and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). That assessment can be located online through the website [www.fisheryprogress.org](http://www.fisheryprogress.org).<sup>38</sup> However, it can not be found on the RIMF website. This illustrates that information on stock assessments is only partially available on government websites.

### Up to date

The assessment marked 'no' for being up-to-date, as some information is only partially available.

### Easy to find

The limited information on stock assessments is not easy to find. It is contained in highly technical reports on the RIMF website that are not aimed at the general public.

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[36] <https://www.rimf.org.vn/Media/Default/TapChi/Muc%20luc.pdf>

[37] [https://fisheryprogress.org/system/files/documents\\_assessment/Vung%20Tau%20mixed%20species-Trawl\\_Environmental%20Rapid%20Assessment%20report%20%281%29\\_0.pdf](https://fisheryprogress.org/system/files/documents_assessment/Vung%20Tau%20mixed%20species-Trawl_Environmental%20Rapid%20Assessment%20report%20%281%29_0.pdf)

[38] [https://fisheryprogress.org/sites/default/files/documents\\_tasks/2013%20-%20STOCK%20ASSESSMENT%20OF%20BLUE%20SWIMMING%20CRAB%20IN%20KIENGIANG%20-%20REVISE.pdf](https://fisheryprogress.org/sites/default/files/documents_tasks/2013%20-%20STOCK%20ASSESSMENT%20OF%20BLUE%20SWIMMING%20CRAB%20IN%20KIENGIANG%20-%20REVISE.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 by-catch 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.

There is no official definition of small-scale vs. large-scale fishing in Viet Nam. Instead, the official categorisation of vessels is based on a combination of the vessel's engine horsepower (hp) and its primary location for fishing activities, separated into three areas: inshore, nearshore, and offshore. According to the General Statistical Office (GSO), in 2022, there were 34,919 vessels with engine capacity above 90 hp.

The GSO's published data does not further breakdown the numbers according to other vessel characteristics. The DOF also provides information on the number of fishing vessels, which presents data according to vessel lengths, not engine capacity. The most recent data found online by the DOF was for 2019 and was presented in the annual plan for MARD published in 2020.

Vessel length (meters)	Vessel numbers
6-12	47,448
12-15	18,687
15-24	27,856
24 and above	2,618
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96,609</b>

It is common for countries to classify fishing vessels over 24 meters as being large-scale or industrial, so this categorisation could be applied to Viet Nam for the FiTI assessment. Another approach could be to limit the category of large-scale fishing vessels to those operating in the offshore region.

It is noteworthy that other sources of information present different data on the number of fishing vessels. In the 2023 annual report on fisheries published by the Vietnamese Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers, the total number of fishing vessels in Viet Nam was 86,820 for 2022, a discrepancy of nearly 10,000 vessels. Of this total, a further breakdown was provided:

- Vessels of 6-12 meters = 38,500
- Vessels of 12-15m = 18,300
- Vessels of 15-24m = 27,500
- Vessels over 24 meters = 2,590.

Government information on the fisheries sector, including on licenses and catches, is uploaded from fisheries officials at the provincial level into a centralised database called VNfishbase. This database was developed in 2000 and has undergone numerous restructuring and improvements, including with funding support from the World Bank. It was originally designed to have restricted access, with only authorised people able to upload and view data. It was also limited to 8 coastal provinces. However, under the World Bank’s Viet Nam Coastal Resource for Sustainable Development, which ran from 2012 to 2019, there was a commitment to transfer this into a publicly accessible database and also to extend the database to all 18 coastal provinces. The project completion report stated that this had been achieved. The Fisheries Information Centre within the DOF is responsible for maintaining this database.

Presently, the VNfishbase has restricted access [see <https://vnf.tongcucthuysan.gov.vn>]. This means that all of the detailed information required for this assessment section is considered unavailable. There is partial information on some requirements, as noted below.

## 5-A | VESSELS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Registry of nationally- and foreign-flagged vessels authorised to fish in Viet Nam 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			
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 granted authorisation to fish			
Type of fishing authorisation held by the vessel			
Quantity and names of target species, permissible by-catch 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			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

There is no public vessel registry in Viet Nam.

It is noteworthy that fisheries committed to an FIP are required to publish a vessel license list. Members of the FIP for trawl fisheries supplying fishmeal factories in Viet Nam have published a list of licensed vessels in this fishery, which can be found on the website [fisheryprogress.org](http://fisheryprogress.org).<sup>39</sup> Additionally, members of the FIP for Yellow Fin Tuna have committed to producing a public vessel registry for tuna fishing vessels, but this has yet to be achieved.

Viet Nam does not contribute to the Global Record of fishing vessels operated by the FAO.

[39] Although this is password protected, anyone can apply for a password. The vessel license list can be found under the documents for the 'Vietnam Mixed Species - Trawl' fisheries improvement project.

## 5-B | PAYMENTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Annual total amount of payments for fishing from large-scale vessels	No		
Name of the natural person or legal entity that made the payment			
Name of the national authority who received the payment			
Date on which payment was received by the national authority			
Purpose of the payment			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

This assessment found no government information on the payments made by large-scale fishing vessels for fishing. However, historical data was collated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for Vietnam until 2016, based on a questionnaire sent to Vietnamese authorities. The reported data does not provide a breakdown of payments according to different segments of the fishing industry and only provides a total figure for annual revenues. In 2016, payments for fishing access amounted to just over USD 4 million.

## 5-C | CATCHES WITHIN VIET NAM'S WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date? <small>(Published data comprises previous calendar year)</small>	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded retained catches	Partially	No	Yes
Disaggregated by species or species groups	No		
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type	No		
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessels	Not applicable		
<span style="margin-right: 20px;"><b>To a limited extent</b></span> <span style="margin-right: 20px;"><b>No</b></span> <span><b>To a full extent</b></span>			

## Available online

The GSO publishes official data on marine fish production. However, the only figures available are for total production, with no further breakdown according to what type of vessels catch what quantities and no data for catches of specific species. This data is available only for 2022.

There are other reports issued by non-government organisations and academics that describe catch data in Vietnam in more detail, which demonstrates that this information is being shared by national and provincial authorities. Vietnam also provides catch data to the FAO, and this can be accessed via the FAO's FishstatJ database. The most recent data available through FishstatJ is for 2021. While this data is provided for different species groups, again, it does not provide information on the catches made by different segments in the fisheries sector (i.e., between large-scale and small-scale fisheries).

Because some data on marine catches is provided by national authorities, this assessment considers the availability of information to be 'partial'.

## Up to date

The available information is not up to date, with the most recent figures being for 2022 only.

## Easy to find

The information provided by the GSO is easy to find.

## 5-D | CATCHES OUTSIDE VIET NAM'S WATERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded retained catches by nationally-flagged vessels	Not applicable		
Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type			
Disaggregated by fishing area (i.e. High Seas and third country)			
<b>Not Applicable</b>			



## Available online

This assessment considers information on the catches of Vietnamese-flagged vessels outside of Viet Nam's EEZ to be 'not applicable'. It is well documented that Vietnamese fishing vessels operate outside the country's EEZ. However, this is unauthorised fishing. Vietnamese authorities could publish estimates on the scale of this fishing. However, because the fishing is unreported, authorities do not record it as catches from outside of Viet Nam's EEZ.

## 5-E | LANDINGS IN VIET NAM'S PORTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded landings in Viet Nam ports of fish caught in Viet Nam waters	No		
Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessel			
<b>No</b>			

## Available online

This assessment did not locate any catch data for specific ports in Viet Nam. It is unclear if official data contained in the VNfishbase includes this information. This assessment assumes that this information is collated, rather than not being produced. However, that might be wrong.

## 5-F | TRANSSHIPMENTS AND LANDINGS IN FOREIGN PORTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual recorded transshipments at sea or landings in foreign ports of fish caught in Viet Nam waters	No		

Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessel			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

Transshipment at sea is legal in Viet Nam. However, this assessment found no public information on the scale of transshipments. It is assumed that this data is collated by public authorities. It is also assumed that all catches made by Vietnamese fishing vessels are landed in ports in Viet Nam, not directly in foreign ports.

## 5-G | DISCARDS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total quantity of annual discards from large-scale vessels authorised to fish in Viet Nam waters	No		
Disaggregated by species or species groups			
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessel			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

This assessment could not locate recent government reports on the discards of commercial fisheries. However, in the late 2000s, Viet Nam's government participated in a regional programme led by the FAO and Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDC) on the improved management of discards and bycatch in trawl fisheries. This resulted in a technical report published in 2009 containing estimates of bycatch in selected areas of Viet Nam, although it described discards as low given that most fish caught by trawlers was retained and sold,

including low-value fish commonly referred to as 'trash fish'.<sup>40</sup>

Technical reports published by the RIMF may contain more up-to-date information on discards and bycatch. However, when searching for this information, the website of RIMF was inaccessible.

It should be noted that information collated for fisheries engaged in Fisheries Improvement Projects includes estimates on discards. For example, WWF and RIMF have produced a report on the bycatch of turtles and sharks for tuna fisheries, with data taken from onboard observers.<sup>41</sup> However, it is unclear whether this information is publicly available on any government website. It is assumed that it is not.

## 5-H | FISHING EFFORT

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total annual recorded fishing effort	No		
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type			
Disaggregated by flag State of the vessel			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

The answer to this question mirrors that given for information on discards. The assessment could not locate data on fishing efforts via government websites, but such data may exist in technical reports published by RIMF. The report on bycatch and discards published in 2009 contained information on fishing efforts, expressed through the number of fishing trips per vessel in specific trawl fisheries. Data on fishing effort is also captured in the stock assessment for blue swimming crab. Such reports indicate that data on fishing effort is available to national authorities, and is likely collated in the VNfishbase. However, there is no systematic reporting by national authorities in Viet Nam on the fishing effort of commercial fishing vessels in different fisheries. In the case of the FIP for yellowfin tuna, collating data on fishing effort is listed as an ongoing requirement, so it is assumed that analysis of this data has yet to be done.

[40] Thong, B., & Dang, V. (2009). National Report on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards, available at: <https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/805>

[41] This report can be accessed here: [https://fisheryprogress.org/sites/default/files/document\\_files/Impacts%20of%20Tuna%20Fishing%20on%20Sharks%20and%20Sea%20Turtles%20in%20Vietnam.pdf](https://fisheryprogress.org/sites/default/files/document_files/Impacts%20of%20Tuna%20Fishing%20on%20Sharks%20and%20Sea%20Turtles%20in%20Vietnam.pdf)



## 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 insufficient 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 implementations.

For the purpose of this part of the assessment, small-scale fisheries are interpreted as vessels below 24 meters in length, as well as fishing without a vessel.

Important data on fisheries in Viet Nam, which includes information on the social and economic characteristics of small-scale fisheries, is included in the **National Rural, Agricultural and Fishery (NRAF) Census**. The GSO undertakes this every five years, and when the year ends in a 1 or 6. Reports of the NRAF Census can be found on the GSO website for 2011 and 2016, but not for 2021. There are no reports online that explain why the census was not undertaken in 2021, but it is possible that this was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The government has announced that a NRAF Census will be conducted in 2025.<sup>42</sup>

### 6-A | VESSELS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total number of commercial small-scale fishing vessels	Partially	No	No
Disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type	No	No	No
	To a limited extent	No	No

[42] <https://en.nhandan.vn/vietnam-to-conduct-rural-and-agricultural-census-in-2025-post136245.html#:~:text=Vietnam%20is%20planning%20to%20carry,Prime%20Minister%20Le%20Minh%20Khai.>

## Available online

As described above, the MARD has published information on the number of fishing vessels operating in Viet Nam for the year 2019. This provides numbers according to length categories. It was not possible to get more recent information from government websites. The data presented by the GSO is only available for vessels using engines above 90hp.

However, information on the number of marine fishing vessels in Viet Nam is incomplete. Published data by the government includes vessels of 6 meters or more, and therefore, it does not include vessels smaller than 6 meters. Some research in Viet Nam reports that such vessels, which are not required to register with provincial authorities, may be numerous.<sup>43</sup>

## Up to date

The available information is only for 2019

## Easy to find

The information can be found in the annual plan for MARD and is not easy to find.

## 6-B | LICENSES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total number of licenses issued to commercial small-scale fishing vessels	No		
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations			
<b>No</b>			

## Available online

This assessment found no information on the number of licenses issued to the small-scale sector on government websites. Fishing licenses are required by all vessels above 6 meters in

[43] See Phoung, V. & Phu, T. (2013) "Managing overcapacity of small-scale fisheries in Vietnam", Fish for the People, Vol 11(2), SEAFDEC: 62. See for example, Xiong Minsi, Wu Zuli, Tang Yi, Su Shu, Shen Huihui. (2022), Characteristics of Small-Scale Coastal Fisheries in China and Suggested Improvements in Management Strategies: A Case Study From Shengsi County in Zhejiang Province', Frontiers in Marine Science (9), <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2022.811382/full>

length. It may be assumed that data on the number of fishing vessels published by the government corresponds to the number of fishing licenses issued. However, it is not uncommon for official data on fishing vessels to differ from information on fishing licenses due to the prevalence of unregistered fishing boats. Further information on how national authorities calculate the number of fishing vessels in Vietnam would be needed to understand this.

## 6-C | FISHERS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total number of licenses issued to commercial small-scale fishing vessels	No		
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations			
Disaggregated by type of occupation <sup>44</sup>			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

The 2016 NRAF Census provided data on the number of households engaged in fishing. However, it did not provide a breakdown of the numbers of people in different sectors of the fishing industry, including coastal small-scale fisheries and offshore large-scale fisheries. The data presented in the 2016 Census was also not provided for men and women, or type of occupation (i.e. full-time, seasonal or part-time). The data in the census also bundles both fish farming with fishing from the seas and freshwater.

It should be noted that labour market surveys in Viet Nam, where more detailed information is provided on employment characteristics, combine fisheries employment with agriculture and forestry, so it is impossible to isolate information for the fisheries sector.

While this assessment could not find more recent employment data for the fisheries sector of Vietnam on government websites, more up-to-date information is available from other non-government sources. These are not consistent, and it is not clear what the sources of information are being used. For example, the OECD data, based on government-reported information, is available up to 2021.<sup>45</sup> The most recent figure on employment in fisheries is

[44] Proportion of full-time work, seasonal or part-time fishing.

[45] [https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=FISH\\_INDICATORS](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=FISH_INDICATORS)

954,293, which does not include those employed in aquaculture or fish processing. However, the fisheries profile of Viet Nam produced by the FAO in 2019 states that the number of marine fishers is 1.8 million.<sup>46</sup> The webpage for data on fisheries published by the FAO provides a link to a more in-depth analysis, but the report provided is from 2002 and gives highly contrasting information: in this publication, the number of people engaged in marine fishing is estimated at 430,000, with 310,000 engaged in coastal fisheries and 120,000 engaged in offshore fishing.<sup>47</sup> It should be noted that information on registered vessels provides limited insight into the number of people engaged in marine fishing. It might be possible to infer employment numbers from data on registered fishing vessels (using an average for the number of crew on types of fishing vessels), however, this would not count those engaged in fishing from vessels under 6 meters in length, and those fishing without a vessel. On type of activity that is often not included in government statistics is referred to as 'gleaning', i.e. the collection of marine wildlife from beaches. There are no official reports on the number of people engaged in gleaning in Viet Nam.

## 6-D | PAYMENTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	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			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

The findings for payment data for small-scale fisheries reflect that of large-scale fisheries, as government information on catches is not disaggregated for different sub-sectors (i.e. large-scale vs small-scale).

[46] <https://www.fao.org/fishery/fr/facp/vnm>

[47] [https://www.fao.org/fishery/docs/DOCUMENT/fcp/en/FL\\_CP\\_VN.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fishery/docs/DOCUMENT/fcp/en/FL_CP_VN.pdf)

## 6-E | CATCHES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total amount of payments made from commercial small-scale fisheries	Partially	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by payments for fishing authorisations, catches and landings	No		
Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations or gear types	No		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

### Available online

The findings are the same for catch data for large-scale fisheries given that government information on catches is not disaggregated for different sub-sectors (i.e. large-scale vs small-scale). However, data on catches for the small-scale sector is likely to be incomplete as it likely does not include information on catches made by fishers using vessels under 6 meters in length or without a fishing vessel.

### Up to date

The available information is up to date, with the most recent figures being for 2022.

### Easy to find

The information provided by the GSO is easy to find.

## 6-F | DISCARDS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total amount of payments made from commercial small-scale fisheries	Not applicable		
Disaggregated by payments for fishing authorisations, catches and landings			



Disaggregated by categories of fishing authorisations or gear types			
Disaggregated by recipient of payments			
<b>Not Applicable</b>			

### 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 small-scale fisheries.



## 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 and it contributes to national food security. 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 access to public 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?	Easy to find?
Total quantity of imports of fish and fish products	Partially	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by species and fish products	No		
Disaggregated by country of origin	No		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

#### Available online

Data on the import and export of fish products is collated by the Vietnamese Customs Authority. Quarterly reports on the value of fish imports and exports can be found on their website. However, this assessment could not locate trade data for species and fishery products on the Customs Authority website. The total figures are, therefore, inclusive of both farmed fish and wild-capture fish.

More detailed information is provided by the Viet Nam Association of Seafood Producers and

Exporters through the publication of regular trade newsletters.<sup>48</sup> Data on the trade of specific fish and fish products is derived from data supplied by the Customs Authority. This illustrates that the government collates detailed information but does not publish it directly on its own website. It is, however, willing to share this with non-government organisations.

### Up to date

The limited information on imports of seafood products is up to date.

### Easy to find

Information on imports of seafood products is easy to find on the Customs Authority's website

## 7-B | EXPORTS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total quantity of exports of fish and fish products	Partially	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by species and fish products	No		
Disaggregated by country of destination	No		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

### Available online

The findings for export data is similar to that of import data.

### Up to date

The limited information on imports of seafood products is up to date.

### Easy to find

Information on imports of seafood products is easy to find on the Customs Authority's website

[48] See for example: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KudWaGMVmKB4pw0Upu-nD0oh00N6ml1H/view>

## 7-C | EMPLOYMENT IN COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total number of people employed in commercial fisheries sectors	No		
Disaggregated by gender			
Disaggregated by sub-sectors			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

Information on employment in fisheries is presented in the NRAF Census. However, the presentation of data does not make it possible to understand how many people are engaged in the post-harvest sector. Data from the 2016 NRAF census includes the number of enterprises engaged in fish processing, and these enterprises are categorised by the number of employees. Five categories are used, starting from enterprises with less than three people up to enterprises with more than 100. Additionally, data is provided for the total number of people employed in the fisheries sector, including those working in households, cooperatives, and enterprises. The total figure of those employed in the fishery sector was just over 1.5 million in 2016. The problem, however, is that this figure includes employment in fishing and fish processing.

OECD data suggests that 265,583 people are employed in fish processing. But this is unconvincing given the much larger number of people reported to be engaged in fishing (just under 1 million). Information published by Oxfam in 2015 claims that over 5 million people were employed in the fisheries sector, which presumably combines all types of fishing, including fish farming.<sup>49</sup>

Other government reports also provide confusing information. The National Strategy for the Development of the Fisheries Sector to 2030 aims to ensure that 3.5 million people are working in the fishery sector. The strategy does not provide information on employment figures, but the presentation of the Strategy suggests that the target of 3.5 million represents a growth over existing employment. However, OECD data shows that throughout the 2010s, more than 3.5 million people were employed in the fisheries sector (when numbers are combined for fish farming, wild capture fisheries and fish processing).

In summary, although government information on the number of people employed in the fishery

[49] <https://vietnam.oxfam.org/promoting-sustainable-wild-capture-fishery>

sector exists, it is impossible to find information specific to the post-harvest sector. Existing information in government and non-government reports is inconsistent and confusing.

## 7-D | EMPLOYMENT IN INFORMAL FISHERIES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total number of people employed in commercial fisheries sectors	Partially	Yes	Yes
Disaggregated by gender	No		
Disaggregated by sub-sectors	No		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

### Available online

In 2022, the GSO published an in-depth assessment of the informal economy in Vietnam.<sup>50</sup> Based on the definition used by the International Labour Office (ILO), this report defined the informal economy in Vietnam as: *“production units owned by households and not constituted as separate legal entities independent of the households or household members that own them, and for which no complete sets of accounts (including balance sheets of assets and liabilities) are available which would permit a clear distinction of the production activities of enterprises from the other activities of their owners and the identification of any flows of income and capital between the enterprises and the owners.”*

This study included estimates of the rate of informal employment for different sub-sectors. The fisheries sector was grouped under the general heading of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, with an estimated rate of informal employment of over 98.8%. This compares to the general rate of informal employment in the country of 68.5%.

The GSO study did not provide a breakdown of informal employment for the fisheries sector specifically. It is impossible to know if informal employment in the fishery sector is more or less than 98.8%. However, for the purpose of this assessment, information on the number of people engaged in informal employment in the fisheries sector is judged to be ‘partially’ available due to the information on the rate of informality in employment. It should be noted, however, that the usefulness of this figure is undermined by a lack of reliable data on the number of people

[50] <https://www.gso.gov.vn/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/LAO-DONG-CO-VIEC-LAM-PHI-CHINH-THUC-0-VIET-NAM-Eg-final.pdf>

employed in the fisheries sector. The assessment score of partially may, therefore, be generous.

The data provided by the GSO was not disaggregated for gender.

### **Up to date**

The information on employment in informal fisheries is considered up to date.

### **Easy to find**

The information on employment in informal fisheries is considered easy to find.



## 8. FISHERIES LAW ENFORCEMENT



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

The subject of law enforcement in Viet Nam’s fisheries sector is dominated by the European Union (EU)'s decision in 2017 to issue a ‘yellow card’ for Viet Nam as a warning of its inability to control illegal fishing. Since the yellow card was issued, efforts to address illegal fishing in Viet Nam have become a priority for the government, given the substantial economic and social impact if the yellow card was upgraded to a red one.

### 8-A | ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
National activities and strategies used for ensuring compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector with national legislation	Partially	Yes	No
Financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with national legislation	No		
Total numbers of inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in ports	No		
	To a limited extent	To a full extent	No

## Available online

Since receiving the EU's Yellow Card warning, the Vietnamese government has implemented a series of legislative and policy measures to improve the management of fishing vessels and combat illegal fishing. According to a 2022 report by independent researchers, the "Vietnamese Government has [since 2017] issued 16 directive and executive documents, including official letters from the Secretariat of the Viet Nam Communist Party, 11 directives and official letters from the Prime Minister, and four executive documents from the National Steering Committee on IUU prevention". Additionally, MARD has released 100 guiding documents addressing these critical issues.

The central government has also established comprehensive legal frameworks, including a fisheries law, two decrees, and 10 guiding circulars and legal documents related to IUU fishing.<sup>51</sup> In 2019, the Prime Minister created the National Steering Committee (NSC) on IUU prevention, led by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development.<sup>52</sup> More recently, in April 2024, the Communist Party issued a Decree on "strengthening the Party's leadership for the fight against illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing and sustainable development of the fisheries industry" Code 3 [2-CT/TW]. Following this, the government released a Resolution detailing an action plan to enforce the directive. This resolution was entitled "Action Program and Plan of the Government to implement Directive No. 32-CT/TW dated April 10, 2024, of the Secretariat on strengthening the Party's leadership in anti-exploitation work, illegal, unreported, unregulated fisheries exploitation and sustainable development of the fisheries industry".

Legislative changes to address IUU fishing have also included the mandatory installation of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) in vessels longer than 15 metres, increased financial penalties for violations and the introduction of an electronic catch certification system.

While there is extensive online information regarding the Vietnamese government's response to IUU fishing, specific details on actions taken remain limited. Government reports on progress to address IUU fishing are exclusively in the form of press releases and short articles on the DOF website. There is no systematic and regular reporting on law enforcement activities, such as details on resource allocation or the frequency and outcomes of inspections.

This assessment did locate reports from the NSC for IUU prevention. These are published as formal notices on the central government website. The most recent example found was issued in September 2022.<sup>53</sup> This includes information on the number of vessels that have installed VMS, but there is no information on the other resources and activities of law enforcement. A

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[51] To Van Phuong and Robert Pomeroy, "Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Removing Yellow Card from European Commission (EC): Vietnam's Determined Actions", *Asian Fisheries Science* 35, no. 1 (2022)

[52] <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/vie186294E.pdf>

[53] <https://datafiles.chinhphu.vn/cpp/files/vbpg/2022/09/302tb.signed.pdf>



lack of data on activities is also evident in the most recent policy documents, as these establish targets for the government's response to prevent IUU fishing, but without baseline information. The most recent Action Plan to implement Directive 32-CT/TW describes the need for ministries to develop more action plans and assign a budget to these plans.

This assessment finds that while the Vietnamese government regularly publishes information on strategies to address IUU fishing, there is limited transparency regarding the resources and activities of law enforcement. This does not suggest the Viet Nam authorities are not implementing strategies against IUU fishing, rather there appears to be no system in place for systematic public reporting.

It is worth noting that although the government of Viet Nam and the European Commission have agreed to an action plan to address the yellow card in Viet Nam, this action plan is not publicly available.

### Up to date

This assessment found multiple articles on the DOF website informing the public on the strategies being deployed to address IUU fishing. All decrees and circulars issued by the government relating to IUU fishing seem to be published on time. For this reason, the assessment considers the information on national strategies being deployed against IUU fishing to be up to date.

### Easy to find

The information on national strategies to prevent IUU fishing is not easy to find. There are no annual reports issued by the government with this information, nor is there a dedicated webpage for this fisheries management topic. Gathering information on national strategies against IUU fishing requires considerable effort in searching through government articles. The situation is compounded by the many government decrees and policy documents being produced on IUU fishing, including from different government organisations. There is also no centralised information on the work of the NSC.

## 8-B | SANCTIONS FOR MAJOR OFFENCES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Record of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector	No		
Name of the company or vessel owner, the nature of the offence and the penalty imposed			
Nature of the offence			
Penalty imposed			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

This assessment did not find publicly accessible records of convictions or penalties for major offences in the fisheries sector. Additionally, there were no case studies or examples showing how national authorities have addressed serious cases of illegal fishing, such as fishing vessels found fishing without a license in foreign waters.

However, an article published on the DOF website, mentioned that in 2022, authorities detected over 1,000 illegal fishing violations, resulting in total fines of approximately 30 billion VND.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, this assessment identified a webpage, seemingly from the DOF website, containing lists of vessels related to IUU fishing.<sup>55</sup> However, this webpage not listed in the navigation of the DOF website - it was found incidentally through a Google search and the information on vessels linked to IUU fishing is somewhat challenging to interpret. The webpage features over 200 spreadsheets spread across 17 pages. These spreadsheets can be downloaded by province and by reporting period, with some containing monthly data while others span six months or even a year. Each spreadsheet holds extensive details, including lists of vessels lacking a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), those without licenses, and vessels previously unregistered but now compliant. Many spreadsheets contain records for hundreds of vessels.

While tracking infringements on a per-vessel basis enhances transparency in law enforcement, the DOF's current organization and presentation of this information is complex, making it difficult for users to navigate and interpret effectively.

[54] <https://tongcucthuysan.gov.vn/en-us/capture-fisheries/capture-fisheries/doc-tin/018095/2022-10-25/requesting-that-localities-complete-the-database-on-fishing-vessels-as-soon-as-possible> <https://tongcucthuysan.gov.vn/vi-vn/iuu>

[55] <https://tongcucthuysan.gov.vn/vi-vn/iuu>



## 9. LABOUR STANDARDS



\_\_\_\_\_ Fisheries provide jobs and income for large numbers of people, both in the harvest and post-harvest sector. However, it is widely recognised that employment in the sector 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 enforcing these standards are well documented. This is critical information for ensuring the rights of people working in the sector are respected. \_\_\_\_\_

### 9-A | ENFORCEMENT OF LABOUR STANDARDS

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
National strategies and activities for ensuring compliance with labour standards in the fisheries sector	No		
Financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with labour standards	No		
<b>No</b>			

#### Available online

This assessment could not find government information on strategies and activities for ensuring compliance with labour standards in the fisheries sector.

## 9-B | SANCTIONS FOR LABOUR STANDARD OFFENCES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total number of labour standard offences in the fisheries sector that have been resolved by national authorities	Not produced		
<b>Not produced</b>			

### Available online

This assessment could not find government information on offences in the fisheries sector related to labour standards.



## 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. \_\_\_\_\_

Direct and indirect subsidies have been provided to the fisheries sector in Vietnam and have been critical to the sector's development. Information on the subsidy programme in the fisheries sector has been submitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO) through notifications from Vietnam's government, although the last report was submitted in February 2020.<sup>56</sup> Information on government subsidies, including for vessel construction, is set out in government decrees.<sup>57</sup> Several organisations have also provided analysis of Vietnam's subsidies, including the World Bank, the OECD and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).<sup>58</sup> Specific subsidies include state support for access to bank loans for boat building, fishers insurance and building infrastructure. The fishing sector has also received several tax incentives, including a reduction in income tax and import duties.

### 10-A | GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL TRANSFERS OR SUBSIDIES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Total value of financial transfers or subsidies to the fisheries sector	No		
Disaggregated by type/purpose			

[56] <https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/G/SCM/N343VNM.pdf&Open=True>

[57] For example, <https://seafood.vasep.com.vn/regulations/government-and-other-ministries/decreed-17-amendments-to-the-government-s-decreed-no-67-2014-nd-cp-dated-july-07-2014-on-certain-fishery-development-policies-15998.html>

[58] Information on State support for bank loans for the fisheries sector is described in this World Bank report: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/884321587357455934/pdf/Vietnam-Agriculture-Finance-Diagnostic-Report-Financial-Inclusion-Support-Framework-Country-Support-Program.pdf> See also, <https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/16655IIED.pdf>

Disaggregated by recipient			
Average annual value of any fuel subsidies per unit of fuel in nominal terms			
<b>No</b>			

### Available online

The government of Viet Nam is transparent about fisheries state-supported development programmes in the fisheries sector and provides information in the public domain on the purpose of fisheries support programmes and the beneficiaries. However, this assessment found no information on the values of these transfers. This information is missing from the notifications sent to the WTO. The OECD has compiled more detailed information on the value of government support to the fisheries sector in Viet Nam up until 2020.<sup>59</sup> This illustrates that the government of Viet Nam collated such information and was willing to share it with the public. However, no evidence exists that this information is being published by national authorities in Viet Nam.

This assessment found no information suggesting that the fishing sector is provided with fuel subsidies.

[59] [https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=FISH\\_INDICATORS](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=FISH_INDICATORS)



## 11. OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE



Official development assistance (ODA) can represent an important source of funds and support for 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?	Easy to find?
List of public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation, funded by bilateral, multilateral and private donors	No		
Project value			
Project purpose and outputs			
Project evaluations			
<b>No</b>			

#### Available online

This assessment found limited government information on public sector projects related to fisheries funded by foreign donors. Viet Nam's government has been the recipient of several donor-funded projects related to marine fisheries in recent times. According to the Creditor Reporting System managed by the OECD, Viet Nam has received overseas aid from 13 bilateral and multilateral donors since 2020: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, World Bank, Japan, Korea and the USA.

The most significant AID programme in Viet Nam's fisheries has been financed through loans by the World Bank. In 2020, a seven-year project entitled "Viet Nam Coastal Resource for

Sustainable Development” was completed.<sup>60</sup> This project was due to be taken forward through a project to be launched in 2020 entitled the Sustainable Fisheries Development Project. The status of that project is hard to determine. The World Bank’s website indicates that this project has been dropped.<sup>61</sup> However, media reports in Viet Nam suggest that the World Bank has renewed its support for the project in 2024.<sup>62</sup> Another example of foreign-funded public projects in Viet Nam is a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) project to Strengthen Coastal resilience in the Mekong Delta.<sup>63</sup>

## 11-B | ASSISTANCE FOR FOREIGN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
List of overseas projects financed through development aid assistance related to fisheries and marine conservation projects			
Project value			
Project purpose and outputs			
Project evaluations			
<b>Not applicable</b>			

### Available online

No information suggests that Viet Nam provides development assistance to other countries in the fisheries sector.

[60] The project completion report is available on the World Bank’s website: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/359301571924282654/pdf/Vietnam-VN-Coastal-Resources-for-Sustainable-Dev.pdf>

[61] <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P171352>

[62] <https://vietnamagriculture.nongnghiep.vn/world-bank-supports-vietnam-in-developing-sustainable-fisheries-d387698.html>

[63] <https://www.usaid.gov/vietnam/news/mar-15-2024-usaid-launches-new-project-strengthen-coastal-resilience-mekong-delta>





## 12. BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP<sup>92</sup>



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

### 12-A | LEGAL BASIS FOR BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Legal basis for beneficial ownership transparency in Viet Nam	Yes	Yes	Yes
Viet Nam's legal definition of beneficial ownership	Yes	Yes	Yes
Thresholds used to determine when ownership and control is disclosed	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disclosure exceptions	Not applicable		
	To a full extent	To a full extent	To a full extent

#### Available online

The legal basis for beneficial ownership transparency in Vietnam is established in the Law on Anti-Money Laundering, passed in 2022. Decree 19/2023/ND-CP was released in 2023 to provide information on how the law should be implemented. This provides a definition of beneficial ownership and the requirement that regulated enterprises obtain information on beneficial owners if they own more than 25% of an organisation's capital.

## Up to date

The information on beneficial ownership reporting is up to date.

## Easy to find

The anti-money laundering law and related decree can be found on the official gazette easily.

## 12-B | BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP REGISTRY

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

## Available online

This assessment could not locate information suggesting that the Vietnamese government plans to develop a beneficial owner register.

## 12-C | BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE IN FISHERIES

Basic information requirements:	Available online?	Up to date?	Easy to find?
Rules and procedures for incorporating beneficial ownership in filings by organisations to agencies regulating access to fisheries	Not produced		
<b>Not produced</b>			

### Available online

There is no evidence that national or provincial authorities require fishing companies to provide information on beneficial ownership.





# **TAKING STOCK**

## Online Transparency of Fisheries Management information

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