



Women's small-scale fisheries organizations in Jubaland State of Somalia

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on behalf of the
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Introduction



Somalia has the longest coastline in Africa, and its fisheries sector is, therefore, crucial to strengthen food and nutrition security among the Somali population, as well as to generating employment. Women occupy a central place in the fishing sector in Somalia, representing 40% of fish workers involved in the artisanal fish trade in the Jubaland State of Somalia. It is now well recognized that women play important roles along the entire fishery value chain, especially the post-harvest sector. Fisheries offer important business opportunities for women, creating valuable incomes for them through which women support local nutrition and food security. However, women are marginalized in the fishing sector and limited in their scope of activities: Lack of financial resources, difficulties in market access, inequity in earning, and social and political exclusion are just a few of the difficulties faced by women.

Collaborating in fishing organizations allows women to act together to improve their livelihoods and increase their participation in social, economic, and political decision processes, thereby optimizing long-term benefits for their communities. Therefore, fostering women's participation in fisheries organizations can be a key leverage to improve women's livelihoods and support local and regional food and nutrition security. But one-size-fits-all approaches that ignore the impact of complicated social, political, legal, and cultural contexts and enforce false presumptions won't produce the desired changes in gender and power relations. To effectively support women's fisheries organizations, a detailed understanding of the specific context under which the groups operate, their current organizational characteristics, context-specific challenges, and capacity gaps, but also existing good practices and strengths that may offer opportunities for successful scaling-up interventions, is a crucial prerequisite.

Between 2017 and 2021, commissioned by the BMZ, GIZ undertook the "Fish for Nutrition" Project, which improved food and nutrition security of the vulnerable population in the city of Kismayo, Jubaland state of Somalia, by promoting fish consumption and availability (Indeson and Gabbaldaye Consulting Firm, 2021). This included activities to strengthen selected women in fisheries organizations in Kismayo, whose results showed that these interventions were beneficial to the women and had potential to be upscaled (SIFALO, 2021). However, beyond Kismayo, the organizational characteristics of women groups and their socio-cultural contexts and challenges are not well known and understood.

In that context, commissioned and financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), its advising Sector Project "Food and Nutrition Security" of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) commissioned HOPE Foundation and FEDERPESCA to conduct a **comprehensive overview examination of women's small-scale fisheries organizations in Jubaland state of Somalia**, including rural areas. This mapping assessment was conducted according to the FAO Handbook "A Methodological Guide for Mapping Women's Small-Scale Fishery Organizations to Assess their Capacities and Needs" (Smith, H., 2022). The specific objectives of the study were to assess their present organizational characteristics, challenges and capacity gaps, identify existing strengths and good practices and assess opportunities to scale these up, and recommend interventions for policy maker to support the women organizations, including relevant indicators.

The study covers two districts – Kismayo and Badhadhe – and is based on information collected from 26 organizations through a survey deployed on the ground by a team of local consultants between December 2022 and January 2023.

The first chapter presents the background of the Somali context, the status of women in the artisanal fisheries and the policy framework in which they are embedded. This is followed by an overview of the approach and methodology applied. The third chapter is devoted to the presentation of the research results, structured around the key topics investigated. The last chapter presents the conclusions and general recommendations of the study.

1. Background



1.1 Women in fisheries in Somalia

Fishing and aquaculture are a growing sector in Somalia which plays a key role in terms of employment, social inclusion, and food and nutrition security. Workers in the sector are predominantly men, especially in the harvesting phase. Nevertheless, women are crucial to the fishing economy, giving a significant contribution to the post-harvesting sector. In addition to gender imbalance, the main challenges are the lack of financial capital, difficulties in accessing the market, poor equity in earnings and limited socio-political inclusion.

Women are a significant economic and social contributor to professional artisanal fishing and their role needs to be better recognized and strengthened. However, the unavailability of comprehensive statistical data does not allow the reflection of women's role and presence in the sector. Despite the lack of data, observing the activity on the ground reveals that the presence of women in the fisheries sector in Somalia is significant; they are mainly organized in cooperatives dealing with all post-harvesting activities, such as accounting tasks, distribution, preservation, processing, and sale of fresh fish. These cooperatives play an important economic and social cooperation role:

firstly, it allows them to strengthen the economic system, improving their livelihoods and increasing their participation in social, economic, and political decision-making processes, thereby optimizing the long-term benefits for their communities, and secondly, it allows them to strengthen the security of the food and nutrition chain.

At first glance, their presence in the fishery and aquaculture industry is dominant. Despite this evidence, the statistics do not reflect the role of women and their presence in the sector. Data on employment in the sector very often do not report a gender differentiation. Women represent an important part of the fisheries system, but their role is not highlighted. They are therefore an invisible category that needs to be given a voice. In this regard, studies and surveys are needed to reflect the actual situation of women workers in the fisheries and aquaculture industry. Indeed, this study aims to analyze the functioning of women's cooperatives in the State of Jubaland in order to understand their needs, internal and external barriers, strengths and weaknesses.

1.2 Jubaland artisanal fisheries

The artisanal fisheries along the Somali coast began to develop in the 1930s when private Italian investors established two canneries in Qandala and Habo on the north coast which provided the first major market for local fishers. The exploitation of coastal resources for commercial purposes by local fishers later spread to the other parts of the country, especially after the Siyad Barre government collectivized fishers into compulsory cooperatives and implemented numerous fisheries facilities at various locations along the coast. But the signs of progress were halted first by the civil war and further hampered by the tsunami that in 2004 devastated many fishing villages on the east coast.

In the last years, thanks to in-kind and financial aid from international agencies, the small-scale fishing sector star-

ted to recover. Despite the difficulties, the artisanal fishing sector slowly but constantly developed in the past decades. The artisanal fishery is much more important to the national economy than the industrial fisheries in terms of production, generation of hard currency, and creation of employment opportunities (*Mapping & Value Chain Analysis of the Fishery Subsector in Somalia*, 2020, UNIDO). Moreover, the cultural attitude towards eating fish is changing and consumption in Mogadishu and Kismayo, for instance, has increased, though it is still low compared to global levels of consumption. From an economic and business perspective, Somalis see a great future for growth in the fishing industry, but to reach this goal, the main challenges faced by the small-scale artisanal fishing sector need to be addressed.

Over the last 30 years, the emergence of the fisheries sector has brought about an unprecedented increase in the number of Somalis taking up fishing as an occupation. However, the exact number of artisanal fishers in the country is unknown since they are not required to register with and obtain fishing permits from federal or state fisheries ministries before they engage in fishing activities. The joint effort of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the FAO enabled to obtain some data on this: in a study conducted by respective fisheries ministries between 2014 and 2016 with assistance from FAO Somalia, a total of 551 fishers and 495 vessels were registered in Jubaland. Moreover, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources registered a few fishing vessels with the help of FAO in 2015, but the full registration of the fishing vessels database and the accurate figures are in FAO's registration center system. Further data and

analysis are made available by the **Productive Sector Development Programme (UNJP/SOM/063/UNJ) Fisheries Master Plan, prepared by the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy of Somalia and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2023)**, which identified 150 cooperatives (men and women) present in Jubaland. The study shows that the major landing sites and commercial ports are Kismayo (Kibora and Alanley), Badhadhe, Goob Weyn, Koyama, Fuma, Chovaye, Chula, Madoa, Kudai, Burgabo and Ras Kamboni, while the minor landing sites and commercial ports are Kibora and Goob Weyn. In terms of logistics, on the other hand, fish products are usually exchanged in two places: landing sites on the coast – where the fishers sell them to the highest bidder –, and designated markets within the city/town limits – where both wholesale and retail trading take place.

1.3 Legal and policy framework

The fisheries and aquaculture sectors were regulated by the Somali Fisheries Law No 23 of 30 November 1985¹, but the new Fisheries Act has just been approved by both chambers and has been signed by the president of the Republic of Somalia. The law applies to both commercial fishing at sea and artisanal fishing in inland waters. The government has laid the foundations to manage sustainability and combat illegal fishing and create jobs in the fishing industry.

In the Somali region, fishing cooperatives have existed for decades, and the government and local fishing communities have started moving towards more formal fisheries management.

In several conferences, including the Somali Fisheries forum of 2019² (attended by partners from intentional organizations and Somali political governance), attendees mentioned the need for co-management to rehabilitate the Somali fisheries sector, which requires a decentrali-

zed participatory approach. In addition to data gaps and limitations of existing statistics in relation to women's presence in the sector, significant gaps remain in the legal recognition of women's role and national policies aimed at enhancing gender equality and facilitating women's access to funds. It is within this context that HOPE Foundation seeks to obtain an in-depth analysis of the presence and role of women's small-scale fisheries organizations in Jubaland State of Somalia. This should inform and support the formulation of future policies to improve the status of women and help their access to this sector's labor market.

1 <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC004926/>

2 <https://securefisheries.org/sites/default/files/SFF2019-Outcomes-Report.pdf>

2. Methodology



2.1 Data collection

2.1.1 Overview

This study is based on information collected through **a survey addressed to a selected number of women's small-scale fisheries (SSF) organizations** in the Kismayo, Badhadhe and Jamame districts of the Jubaland State of Somalia.

Data were collected between 21 December 2022 and 25 January 2023. Members of the selected women's SSF organizations were invited in Kismayo at the Ministry of Fisheries, where a team of trained local consultants interviewed them and gathered the information.

Key findings coming out from the analysis of survey data and related recommendations for capacity enhancement activities have been validated through a follow-up engagement with women's organizations and relevant SSF stakeholders during **an online event** on 26 January 2023.

Considering the information gaps and to better understand some trends in the data, the research team also organized **a follow-up online interview** with several representative of women's groups based in Kismayo on 14 March 2023. This interview mainly focused on external linkages.

2.1.2 Sampling of women's SSF organizations

Starting from the overall numbers of women's SSF organizations in each district as provided by the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Resources of the Jubaland State and integrated by internal expert knowledge, the research team identified the organizations in scope by applying the following criteria:

- The group identifies as an organization, either formally registered or informal.
- Membership is majority (more than 50%) women.
- Women are an active part of the organization's leadership.
- Most group members are engaged in capture fishing and related activities including pre-harvest, processing, and trade of fish or fish products.

Out of the total number of relevant organizations, the research team defined a sample for the study by applying the following protocol and set the minimum number of women's SSF organizations to be targeted through the survey in each district (always rounding up to a whole number):

- Fewer than 7 organizations: sample 100%.
- 8–10 organizations: sample 60%.
- 11–14 organizations: sample 50%.
- 15–20 organizations: sample 40%.
- More than 20 organizations: sample 30% where possible, 20% as needed.

The minimum number of surveys was achieved in the Kismayo district while this was not possible in the Badhadhe and Jamame districts (Table 1). As for the Badhadhe district, for security reasons, travel in the area was difficult, and only 5 out of 10 organizations were able to reach Kismayo for the interview. Regarding Jamame, since this district was under the control of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, it was not possible for the organization located there to leave the district and participate in an activity organized by the Somali Government.

STATE	DISTRICTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS PRESENT	MINIMUM NUMBER OF SURVEYS TO BE COLLECTED	NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS SURVEYED
Jubaland State of Somalia	Kismayo	28	9	21
	Badhadhe	10	6	5
	Jamame	1	0	0
	TOTAL	39	15	26

Table 1: Districts surveyed, target and actual numbers of surveys collected for the study.

Overall, the study covers a sample of **26 organizations**. Out of these, 21 are groups (i.e., having more than one member) and 5 are individual vendors (all from Kismayo).

Acknowledging the specificities of individual women entrepreneurs vs. women's groups, answers from individual vendors were only considered in the analysis of some key dimensions and namely: district and type of water body where the activities occur (section 3.1.1); steps in the value chain and types of fish the organizations

work with (section 3.1.7); processing procedures (chapter 3.1.8); internal and external barriers (section 3.3).

In general, when referring to “*organizations*” the analysis refers to both groups and individual vendors, and when referring to “*groups*” the analysis only refers to the responses of the multi-member organizations.

Percentages included in the text are most of the time calculated on the number of actual respondents. Since this number often varies from question to question (as respondents skipped some questions), absolute numbers are also provided for clarity.

2.1.3 Survey questionnaire and training

The survey questionnaire was structured along the example of the semi-structured questionnaire included in the FAO Handbook “A Methodological Guide for Mapping Women’s Small-Scale Fishery Organizations to Assess their Capacities and Needs”. The adoption of the same questionnaire used in similar studies covering different regions, should make cross-country comparisons easier and eventually better support future decisions in the area.

Survey questions aim to:

- Map key organizational characteristics and namely: type and status, history and objectives, rules, membership, internal communication and meetings, access to assets, value chain activities, processing procedures, finances and external linkages;
- Identify strengths and key achievements;
- Point at main challenges and needs

As requested by GIZ the research team integrated the FAO questionnaire with few questions on the impact of Covid-19, droughts and terrorist acts.

The consultant organized a virtual training for the four local data collectors to share the data collection methodology and ensure a common approach in its implementation. The two-hour training covered the purpose and scope of the study, the survey questions, and how to arrange for and facilitate surveys.

2.1.4 Survey deployment

The Hope Foundation Analysis Officer in the field supervised the data collection process and managed the team of local data collectors who deployed the survey.

For security reasons, all surveys took place in the city of Kismayo, and rural groups were surveyed by bringing them to Kismayo with the support of the DG. Each survey was deployed by one member of the data collection team, and it usually involved two to three representatives from the selected women’s SSF organization (such as Chairperson, Vice-Chair, and regular members).

Members of the organization collectively answered the questions and responded as to their group-level (i.e., not individual) characteristics only.

Each survey took 1–2 hours to complete. Respondents were introduced to the purpose of the survey and asked to give their consent before proceeding; they were also informed of their right to skip questions or end the interview at any time. Data were collected digitally with a smartphone or tablet, using the free software Kobo Toolbox and the app Kobo Collect to record responses.

For a detailed overview of the methodology, see the FAO Handbook “A Methodological Guide for Mapping Women’s Small-Scale Fishery Organizations to Assess their Capacities and Needs” prepared by Hillary Smith (2022).

2.2 Work Plan

TOTAL NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS PRESENT	MINIMUM NUMBER OF SURVEYS TO BE COLLECTED	NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS SURVEYED
Collection of background data, including an estimation of the numbers of women's organizations in the Jubaland State of Somalia to be surveyed Liaising with GIZ project coordinator and Jubaland State Minister of Fisheries	Background summary	Study lead and HOPE/Federpesca technical staff
The development of an initial work plan and sampling protocol and the definition of inclusion criteria	Initial work plan that is in alignment with the FAO Methodological Handbook	Study lead and HOPE/Federpesca technical staff
To conduct field surveys in Kismayo using the questionnaire from the FAO methodological handbook, applying a standard methodology	Digital data sheets with all data collected (data base)	Data Analyst
To compile the data in a clean data management system, analyze the results and prepare a final presentation	Digital data sheets with all data collected (data base), results analyzed and final presentation	Data Analyst and Study lead
To conduct a follow-up engagement to validate the results of the assessment with women's organizations and relevant SSF stakeholders	Final presentation of study results during online event	Study lead – Data Analyst – HOPE/Federpesca technical staff
To write down the results in the form of a final (extensive) report and a (shorter) policy brief	Final report with analysis of the data, answers to the objectives and recommendations for implementation and outreach Policy brief summarizing the main results and recommendations for implementation and outreach	Study lead and HOPE/Federpesca technical staff

Table 2: Work Plan

2.3 Study limitations

As illustrated in the Introduction, the study has a well-defined scope and only covers women's SSF organizations located in the Jubaland State in Somalia. Findings resulting from the analysis are therefore highly context-specific and should not be generalized (neither to other regions nor to the entire country). The specific focus of this study also limited the possibility to further qualify the findings coming out from the analysis and compare them with similar types of organizations located in other districts or countries, or with other types of organizations that operate in the same sector. Besides these overarching considerations on the scope of the

study, it is also important to point at some challenges encountered by the research team during its implementation. It is indeed important to consider these limitations when interpreting the findings of the study and to recognize the potential impact that these limitations may have on the representativeness and validity of the study results.

- **Geographical coverage:** The study focused on three districts - Kismayo, Jamame and Badhadhde. All women's SSF organizations were invited in Kismayo at the Ministry of Fisheries for the survey, but only some actually attended. While the research team

managed to collect information on the Kismayo and Badhadhde organizations, they were unable to collect data from the Jamame district due to security threats. This might have somewhat impacted the overall representativeness of the study.

- **Sampling:** Due to time constraints and limited resources, the research team invited all women's SSF organizations to gather at the Ministry of Fisheries in Kismayo. This may have introduced sampling bias and may not represent the perspectives of all women's SSF organizations in the region.
- **Quality of data:** despite the initial training, data collected were sometimes inconsistent and had gaps. For instance, the conditional nature of some survey questions (e.g., usefulness of the knowledge acquired during trainings, specific activities performed on the types of fish the organization work with, etc.) was not always respected thus generating an inconsistent evidence base. Also, when multiple options could be selected to answer a question, only one option is

indicated thus making the subsequent conditional questions sometimes inconsistent. Where possible and objectively sound, the research team cleaned the database. However, a certain degree of inconsistencies and gaps remains. To deal with this, in some cases, the research team applied some filters to consider only the responses of knowledgeable stakeholders. In other cases, where filters were not applicable without introducing a subjective judgement, the responses were analysed in an aggregated manner to highlight key messages and reflect the scale and relative importance of different elements (instead of providing indications of specific shares of respondents). To conclude, little qualitative information was collected during the interviews to complement closed questions thus limiting the room for explanation of some results. In this view, the research team performed a follow up interview with some representatives from the organizations to gather additional evidence and fill some of the gaps.



3. Results



3.1 Overview of organizational characteristics

3.1.1 Type and status

The survey includes data collected from **26 women's SSF organizations**.

Most of them are groups, either fishing cooperatives (77%, n=20) or unspecified groups of women (4%, n=1). The remaining are **individual vendors** (19%, n=5).

All groups are registered. The majority (n=12) are registered with the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Resources of the State of Jubaland in Somalia, a few (n=7) are registered with the Ministry or Department of Cooperatives and the remaining two are registered with the Registrar general and with a local cooperative (i.e., Samara Cooperative). Exchanges during the follow-up interview with some representatives from the groups and the Director General of the Ministry of Fisheries, clarified that all groups are known and interact with the Ministry of Fisheries, but some of them are not formally registered with a certificate.

Organizations are mostly based in the **Kismayo District** (81%, n=21) and only few are located in the **Badhadhe**

District (19%, n=5).

Most of the organizations' fishery-related activities occur on the marine coastal zone, with 96% of the organizations (n=24) working on the coast, and only a small part occurs on freshwater lakes (4%, n=1) (Figure 1). Groups working in the rural areas on rivers usually sell fish to the Kismayo Market transporting it with cars or boats.

Groups usually have a district-level scale and gather members coming from the whole District (76%, n=16) and only a few gather only members from the village (24%, n=5) (Figure 2).

Regarding the presence of basic administrative structures and procedures, data collected show a **relatively good level of administrative management**. Out of the 21 groups, most of them include an executive committee (86%, n=18), as well as a constitution or by-laws (81%, n=17) and a significant majority maintain an updated membership list (76%, n=16). Having a bank account is less common (52%, n=11), as well as keeping meeting records or minutes (43%, n=9).

Type of water body where activities occur (N= 25)

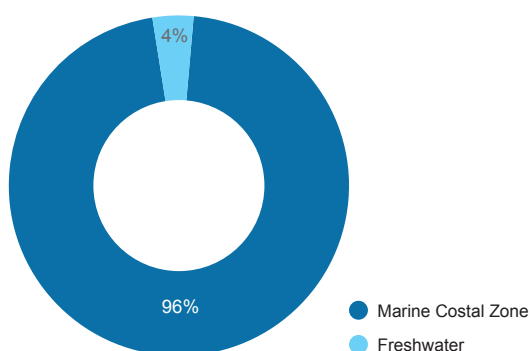


Figure 1: Type of water body

Scale of the group (N= 21)

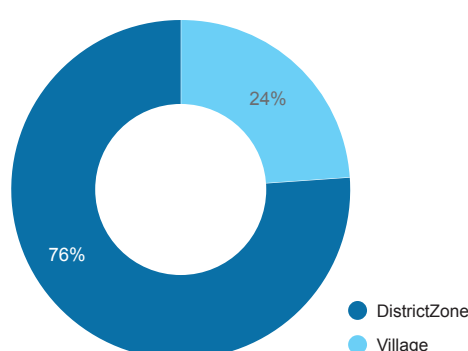


Figure 2: Scale of the organization

The presence of basic administrative structures and procedures in women’s small-scale fisheries groups

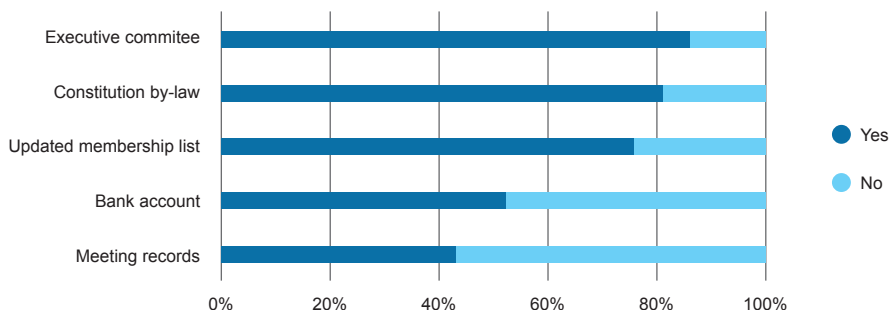


Figure 3: Presence of basic administrative structures and procedures in women’s SSF groups

Data show that in most cases the legal steps to set up a co-operative are carried out, thus ensuring the creation of an executive committee as well as the availability of a statute. The main shortcomings occur on a day-to-day operational level. Often there is no bank account, thus limiting the traceability of economic transactions. In addition, progress is not tracked, and no strategy is planned due to limited attention to reporting meeting records.

3.1.2 History and objectives

Women’s SSF groups in Jubaland State of Somalia are **quite recent**. Most of them have been created over the last five years (the oldest one was created in 2014 and the youngest ones in 2021).

As shown in Figure 4, most groups were **self-created**, either by an individual or by a group of like-minded community members or were formed with outside help by an NGO.

Groups were mainly created to **improve household welfare or livelihoods** (52%, n=11) or to increase gender equality (e.g., in response to hardships women face) (29%, n=6). In this regard, women interviewed highlighted the importance to share information, support each other and be united (Figure 5).

Only few groups (n=4) were created with the primary objective of expanding trade and market access, learning new skills and techniques for harvesting or processing, or creating a better access or rights to natural resources (e.g., fish).

Who initially started the groups (N=21)

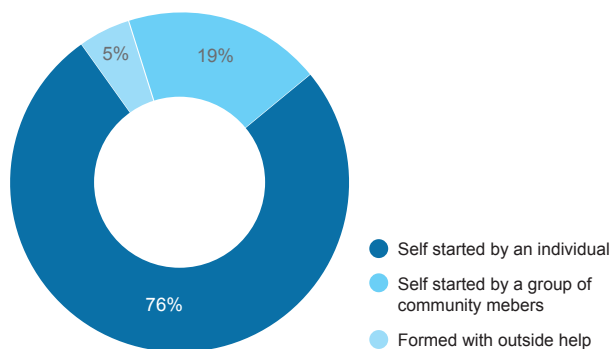


Figure 4: Who initially started the groups.

The main objectives and purpose of the groups (N=21)

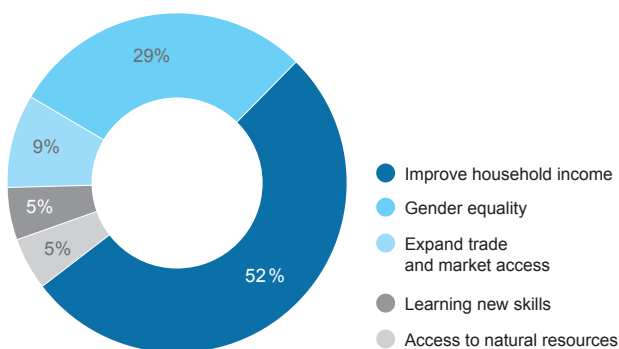


Figure 5: The main objectives and purpose of the groups

Fishing activities seem therefore to be considered as a solution to address contingent subsistence concerns rather than an objective in itself and women seem to join fisheries groups to improve their conditions rather than to improve techniques and processes of an already established activity. This is supported by the fact that, as reported by women involved in the follow-up interview, despite that these groups are mainly focused on fisheries activities, when the river floods into lakes, some of them buy fish from the lakes and, after the lake dries, some of them cultivate the land and plant vegetables, maize etc. Sometimes, they start directly with agricultural cultivation when the ocean waves are high, as this means that fishing will not be possible for the season. Groups therefore tend to adapt to the resources offered by the territory and develop the most suitable means of livelihood rather than specialize in a unique activity.

As described above, most women’s SSF groups in Jubaland are young and, as such, they are **still focusing on formalizing their activities and achieving their primary goals**. Data show that a significant share of women’s SSF groups are either at an initial stage and are legally formalizing the group (45%, n=9) or are focused on meeting their initial primary objectives (40%, n=8). Only in few cases, groups reported that they are working to meet new or secondary objectives (15%, n=3) (Figure 6).

Stage of collective action the groups are focused on (N=20)

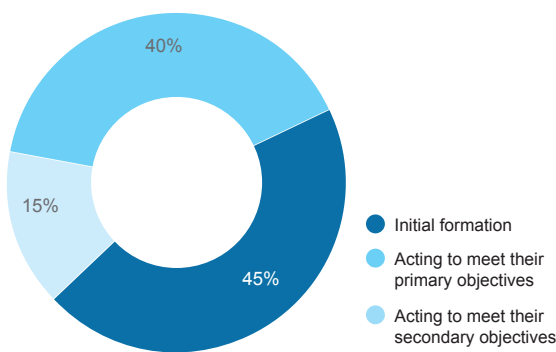


Figure 6: Stage of collective action the groups are focused on.

Despite their initial stage of development, several groups feel that **some progress has been made towards their purposes**. More specifically, 66% of the groups (n=14) consider that they made significant progress, and 10% (n=2) that they made at least partial progress towards their original objectives. Nearly one quarter (24%, n=5) stated that they haven’t done any progress towards their original objectives (Figure 7).

3.1.3 Rules

Overall, **groups are quite structured** with a slight majority of the groups having functional rules in place to manage their daily operations. Specifically, out of the 21 groups, the majority stated to have rules on the choice of the leaders (67%, n=14). 62% of the groups have rules on the removal of a member (n=13) and 57% have rules on the acceptance of new members and changes in the leadership (n=12) (Figure 8).

Compliance with rules for the membership fees (when existing) **remains a challenge**. Only in around half of the groups, members follow the rules for membership fees and always pay their regular contributions (55%, n=11). In the other half, members either rarely pay the fees (35% of the groups, n=7) or never pay the fees (10% of the groups, n=2).

Perception of success of groups in achieving their goals (N=21)

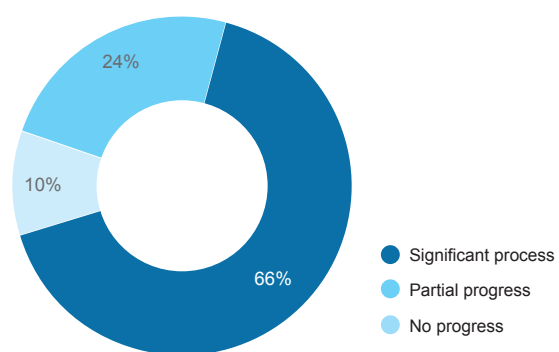


Figure 7: Perception of success in achieving the group objectives.

Active internal rules

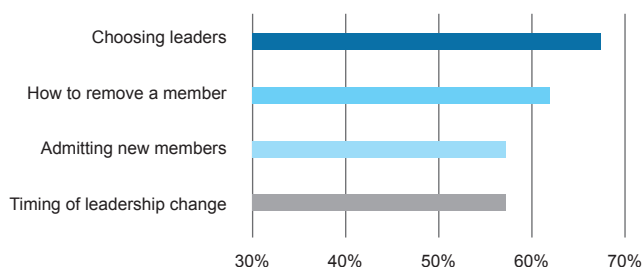


Figure 8: Active internal rules

Rules are generally created by the executive and general members in most of the groups (90%, n=18) thus showing a collective approach to decision-making. Only in two groups (10%) rules are created only by the President or the Chairperson.

Leadership changes occur quite regularly within groups, on average every 2 to 4 years.

3.1.4 Membership

When they were first formed, the **average size** of a women’s SSF group in the Jubaland State was 13 members. Most groups have grown over the years by adding new members and the current average size of a women’s SSF group is now **15 members**. Most groups (80%, n=16) declared to be interested in growing and gaining new members and reported that they are actively adding new members and growing. This might anticipate a further increase in the average size of women’s SSF groups in the forthcoming future.

The few groups (n=3) that are not interested in growing consist of 8 to 15 members and mainly operate at the village level (not at the district level). It can be therefore assumed that their need is limited in geographical and economic terms albeit very often the unwillingness to increase membership is linked to difficulties in finding new members.

Most groups (76%, n=16) are all-female groups, and only a minority (24%, n=5) are mixed-gender groups with a strong predominance of female members. Out of the

mixed-gender groups, 60% reported a gendered division of labor, with men fishing, while women do other processing and marketing activities.

Being part of an all-female group is largely considered as an advantage by both all-female groups and mixed-gender groups. As shown in the table below, being part of an all-female group allow women, among others, to better support each other (having the same problems and needs), to avoid harmful judgements and criticism from men, to communicate more easily, to work as a team and to pursue the women empowerment as a common goal. In the few cases where interviewed women acknowledged the value of mixed-gender groups, this was mainly linked to the potential increase in the organization productivity (e.g., by

ADVANTAGES OF FEMALE-ONLY GROUPS	ADVANTAGES OF MIXED-GENDER GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women work well, are responsible and can be trusted. • We work together and make the same decisions to develop ourselves. • Since we are all women, we say nothing (bad) to ourselves. • We prefer to be all women just because we have our own problems. • We can support ourselves. • We prefer to come together in one place because we have unique needs. • We do things together as women also to improve ourselves. • Men think women can't do anything. • In a women-only cooperative we could work and communicate more easily. • Men are not cooperating and are not supporting us. • In a women-only cooperative we could empower ourselves. • We have our own problems, and we need to resolve them between us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We prefer men to work with us, as long as it is to increase fishing activity. • We prefer 50–50 gender balance, in order to have support in the capital and to have different ideas to share. • We can work as a team and support the group's goal with a clear plan. • With the advantage of working with different ideas and with more income.

Table 3: Advantages of female-only groups and mixed-gender groups

increasing fish catching activities), to the additional economic support they could get, as well as to the possibility to share different ideas.

Regarding **members' engagement in the group activities, rates are still low** (5–10%). Information collected does not allow to understand the reasons behind this, but based on the research team's knowledge, it is reasonable to assume that low female empowerment due to cultural factors and low education might contribute to less motivation to participate in decision-making and group processes.

3.1.5 Internal communication and meetings

Internal communication appears to be suboptimal in around half of the groups. While 48% of groups (n=10) reported a regular exchange of relevant information (e.g., information acquired during trainings, meetings, or workshops), for 52% of them (n=11) internal communication is still not systematic. More specifically, group members share relevant information with the rest of the group only half of the time (in 19% of the groups, n= 4), rarely (in 28% of the groups, n=6) or never (in 5% of the groups, n=1). This is mainly due to a lack of consistent administrative procedures governing information sharing, and, to a lesser extent, to lack of accountability or enforcement of administrative procedures for information sharing, levels of literacy, and access to technology.

When information is shared, this is done:

- in an **accessible** way for all or most of the members of the group (95%, n=19), and
- mainly through **face-to-face informal exchanges** (52%, n=11) or through regular or special meetings (33%, n=7).

Most groups (86%, n=18) **regularly meet to work together** (e.g., to do processing and value addition activities, to harvest fish, or to maintain equipment). These meetings usually occur once (n=8) or twice (n=5) a month, and are held throughout the whole year, thus ensuring a certain level of continuity to the activities of the group.

Internal communication (N=21)

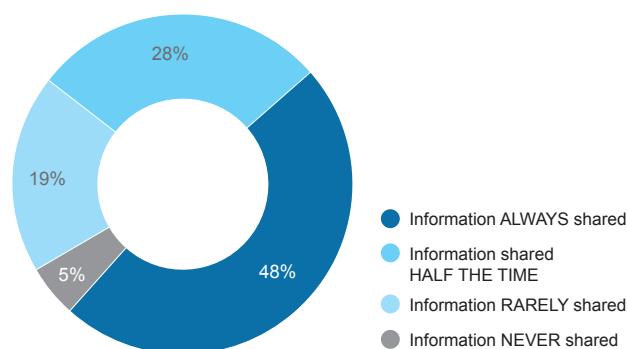


Figure 9: Internal communication.

In addition, most groups (90%, n=19) also meet for:

- **Regular meetings** (e.g., to address group business such as dividing money, discussing market changes, or weather). The frequency of these meetings can vary among groups and can range from 10-12 times a year for the more structured groups (35%, n=7), to 1 or 2 times a year for the less structured groups (25%, n=5).
- **General meetings** (e.g., to elect officials, review annual activities or reports, discuss long-term plans). Also, in this case the frequency can change and groups tend to differentiate between those gathering 1 to 4 times a year (69%, n=11) and those gathering nearly every month (31%, n=5).

3.1.6 Access to key assets

Access to key assets is **critical**.

29% of the groups (n=6) do not have access to **any** asset and for the remaining groups the access is limited to only few types of the assets that are usually needed to perform fishing related activities at the core of the groups' business. Except for the access to an office for performing business activities and a secure workspace (for drying, processing, packaging, storing equipment), the access to all other types of assets is very limited and only few groups managed to have it (Figure 10). This is particularly true for the access to transportation equipment and to specific equipment for post-harvesting activities.

Active internal rules

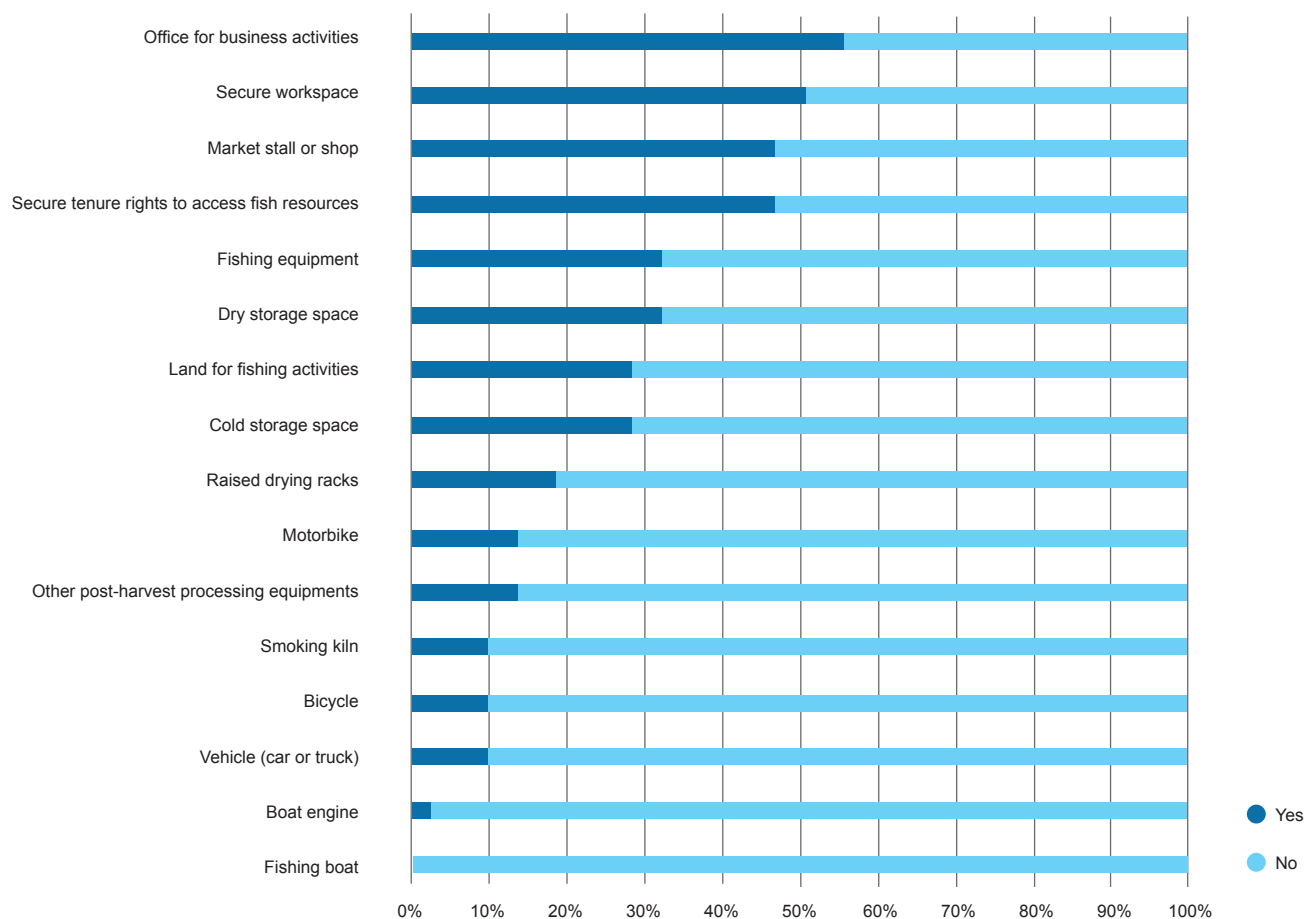


Figure 10: Types of assets groups have access to

Main weaknesses can be highlighted in relation to:

- **Rights:** The access to land to use for fishery activities is very rare and most of the groups do not have it (71%, n=15). Similarly, tenure rights to access fish resources are available to only 48% (n=10) of the groups.
- **Storage spaces:** Dry and especially cold storage spaces are rare and only few groups have access to them. Specifically, 67% (n=14) do not have access to dry storage space for keeping value-added fish products (e.g., sun-dried, fried, or smoked and packaged fish), and 71% (n=15) do not have access to cold storage space (e.g., coolers with ice or electricity) for keeping

fresh fish.³ Preservation issues are quite common among groups, especially for those operating on the river areas and a lot of food is wasted because of this.

- **Transportation equipment needed for the distribution of fish:** Most groups do not have it. Only 10% (n=2) have vehicles (e.g., car or truck) for transporting fish or fish products, which are not owned but rented; 14% (n=3) have motorbikes; and 10% (n=2) have bicycles, push-trikes or push-carts. The lack of transportation equipment reduces the size of the potential market and might eventually contribute to reducing the development opportunities for the groups.

³ As reported by women involved in the follow-up interview, there was an ice-making machine in Kismayo provided by GIZ, but it is currently not working due to battery problems.

Value chain activities (N=23)

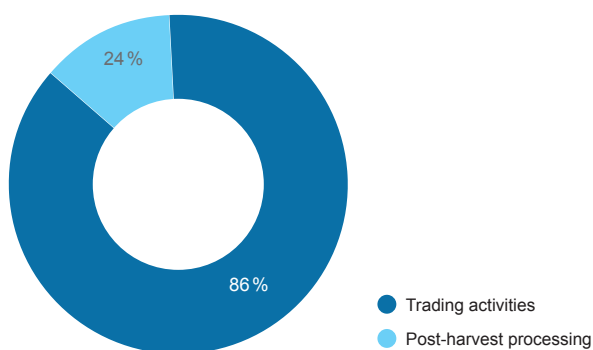


Figure 11: Value chain activities

As reported by GIZ, the Fish for Nutrition Project provided 8 fish trucks to 24 beneficiaries. However, data from the survey did not allow to validate the information and to understand the use that have been done of these trucks.

- Distribution – Only half of the groups (48%, n=10) have access to a market stall or shop thus making it difficult for the other half to easily distribute their fishery products and might bring along additional burden to find viable distribution channels.

All assets are hardly ever owned but are often collectively rented (apart from fishing equipment and the single boat engine, which are always owned).

Active internal rules

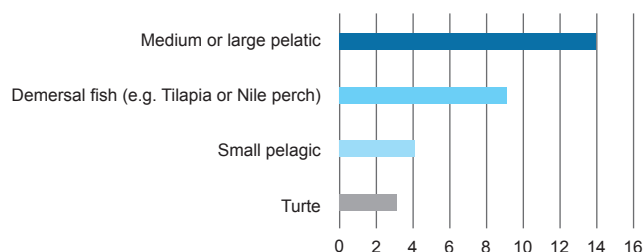


Figure 12: Type of fish the organization works with

3.1.7 Value chain activities

In most of the organizations most members are engaged in post-harvesting activities – mainly trading (87%, n=20) and to a lesser extent processing (13%, n=3) (Figure 11). While post-harvesting activities represent the core of the activities of the organizations, information collected through the survey when discussing other questions shows that few groups are also active in harvesting activities.

Regarding processing, most groups adopt drying fish techniques. Processing activities (including also smoking fish and packaging) are done either collectively, or collectively and individually, and very rarely these are conducted only individually. This also applies to trading activities and, in particular, to the transportation of products.

Species importance ranked by income generation

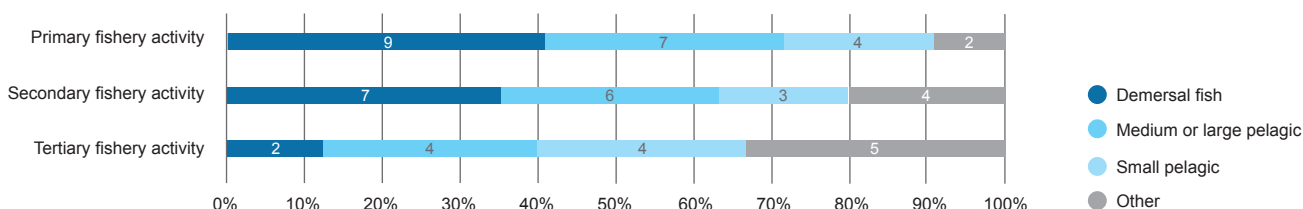


Figure 13: Species importance ranked by income generation. White numbers refer to numbers of organizations.

How the resources are accessed by the organizations

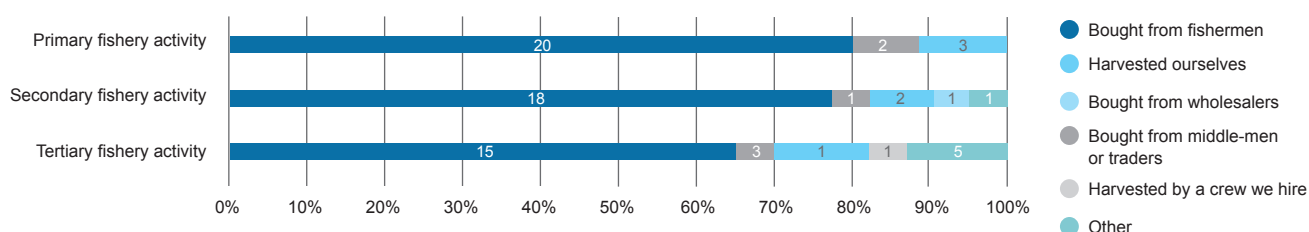


Figure 14: How the resources are accessed by the organizations. White numbers refer to numbers of organizations.

Where the organizations primarily sell their products

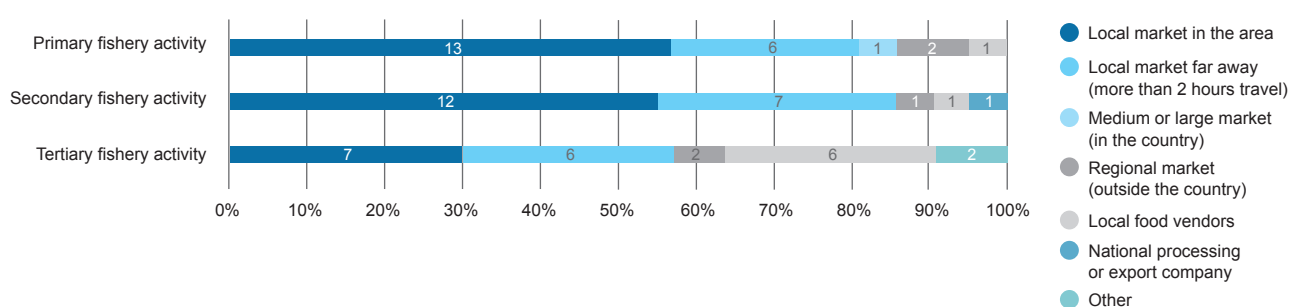


Figure 15: Where the groups primarily sell their products. White numbers refer to numbers of organizations.

Fisheries activities of the Jubaland's organizations focus on a variety of fish species:

- **Medium/large pelagics⁴ are at the core**, with 14 of the organizations working with them (Figure 12). This also reflects the fact that most organizations focus their activities on marine and coastal zones and are located in the Kismayo district. Demersal fish⁵ is also important with 9 of the organizations working with it;
- Women SSF groups usually **diversify their fishery activities** and work on average with two different types of fish (often medium/large pelagics and demersal fish);
- **Demersal fishes were ranked most often as the greatest income-earner**, followed by medium or large pelagics. Invertebrates are an important species for tertiary fishery activities (ranked under the "other" category) (Figure 13).

Organizations most often **access fish by buying it directly from fishermen** and only in limited cases by harvesting it themselves (individually or as a group) (Figure 14).

Outlets for selling fish vary, with **most organizations relying on local markets in the area** or far away – meaning more than 2 hours of travel – and, to a lesser extent, on local food vendors. As shown in Figure 15, most of the organizations' income derive from sales on the local markets in the area.

3.1.8 Processing procedures

Post-harvesting processing for the women's SSF organizations mainly consist in **sun drying** (Figure 16).

Organizations sun-dry fish without racks. They place fish **either on tarps or cloth on the ground** (33%, n=8),

⁴ When providing details on the species, the groups mainly mentioned sailfish, tuna and shark.

⁵ When providing details on the species, the groups mainly mentioned lobster and rabbit fish.

Number of organizations per type of processing procedure

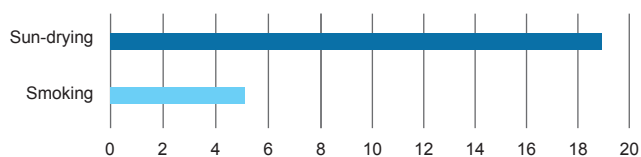


Figure 16: Number of organizations per type of processing procedure

Problems drying fish (N=18)

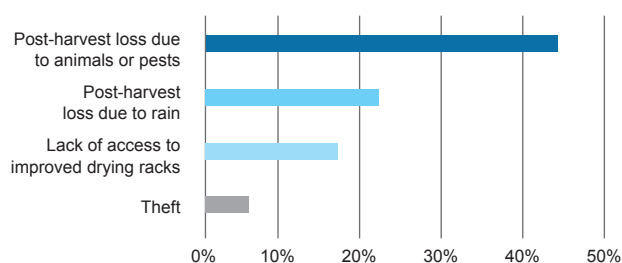


Figure 18: Problems drying fish

Methods for sun-drying fish (N=24)

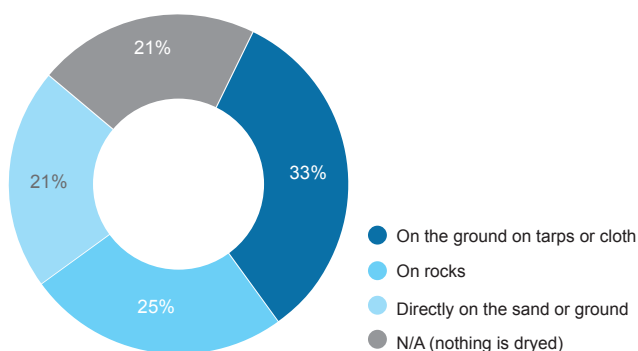


Figure 17: Methods for drying fish

on the rocks (25%, n=6), **or directly on the sand or ground** (21%, n=5). The remaining 21% (n=5) don't sun-dry fish (Figure 17). This resonates with the limited access to raised racks highlighted in section 3.1.6 where data show that only 19% of the groups have access to raised racks and that in these cases these are usually collectively rented and not owned.

Among the 18 organizations that responded to the question regarding problems with drying fish, all of them (except for two) experienced some challenges. These are mainly related to post-harvest loss due to pests (44%, n=8) and rain (22%, n=4) (Figure 18).

When smoking fish, this is always done with traditional kilns. Out of the five groups that usually smoke fish, the main problem is linked to the access to improved oven technologies and, in one case, to the access to or price of fuelwood.

Source of income (N=21)

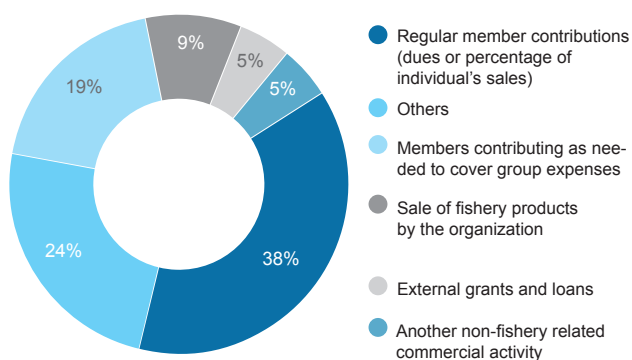


Figure 19: Source of income

3.1.9 Finances

The **main source of income of the groups is often linked to regular member contributions** (dues or percentage of individual sales) (38%, n=8). As shown in Figure 19, groups' expenses are covered in most cases by the contributions of the members – either regular or ad-hoc contributions.

Groups vary in terms of degree of financial independence with half of them that cannot ensure their self-sufficiency. Out of the groups that provided a response (n=12), only half (50%) reported to be fully financially independent and sufficient, and the remaining groups reported to be somewhat (33%) or completely dependent (17%) on outside financial support.

External financial support

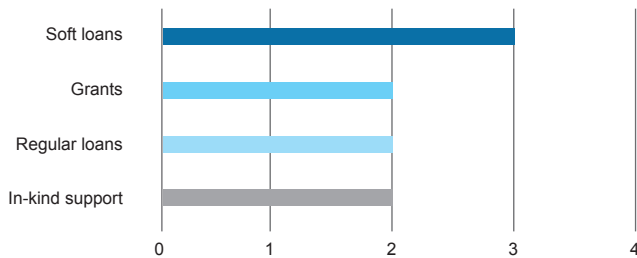


Figure 20: External financial support

There is **no common practice in the management of financial records and accounts**. While 52% (n=11) of the groups make them accessible to regular members for review, the remaining 48% (n=10) do not, thus witnessing a lack of transparency and accountability of the group towards its members.

Groups also **vary in how they divide their profits**. In 57% of the groups (n=12) profits go to the group account first and are then distributed to individuals at a later time, while in 33% (n=7) of the groups individual members keep their profits from the sale of fish products and regularly make contributions to the group account.

Contacts with technical government officers

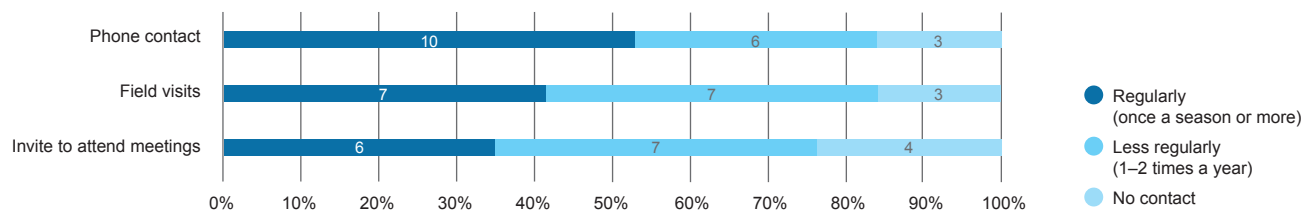


Figure 21: Fisheries management or governance activities

While this finding could be partially linked to the recent establishment of most groups in the Jubaland State and to the difficulties in collecting the membership fees (see section 3.1.3), it can also reflect practical difficulties in accessing **external financial support** which appears to be **not a common source of group income**. As shown in Figure 20, very few groups received grants, loans, or in-kind support over the last five years and more specifically:

- Grants: Two groups received a grant (provided by international cooperation projects)
- Soft loans: Three groups received soft loans provided by an NGO, a commercial bank, and a microfinance institution, respectively
- Regular loans: Two groups received regular loans from microfinance institutions
- In-kind support: Two groups received donations of goods or services by NGOs
- No groups received subsidies or cost sharing assistance

3.1.10 External linkages

Women's SSF groups in the Jubaland State usually **operate alone** and outside existing national or regional umbrella organizations. Only one group based in Kismayo reported to be part of a wider group.⁶ When explanations were provided, few women reported that, because of their gender, their groups tended not to be considered as a priority. Contrary to this evidence, representatives from the groups attending the follow-up interview reported the existence of the Jubaland Fisheries Consortium: a network of groups based in Kismayo that financially supports those who need help and interacts with the Ministry of Fisheries to collect documents for the different groups. However, information collected does not allow to understand the level of formalization of this consortium and verify its actual membership.

When asked about the opportunity to join a wider organization (e.g., a national platform or umbrella group),

⁶ No specific information is provided on the type of group except for the fact that it covers the Kismayo district and it aims to sell dry fish to Lamu and Mombasa.

opinions are mixed, and half of the groups (n=10) think it would be beneficial while the other half (n=11) do not see any benefit.

Most of the groups that show propensity to join wider umbrella organizations have also established regular **contacts with other women's organizations or fisherfolk groups**. Information is shared mainly through phone calls and meetings, and some groups (n=8) also participated in a learning exchange with other women's organizations.

These findings suggest the existence of different degrees of openness towards external linkages. While around half of the groups share information, learn from each other and are willing to join bigger umbrella organizations, the other half appears to be more closed to external peer exchanges and not willing to take part in bigger and more formalized organizations.

Groups are usually not involved in fisheries management or governance activities. All except three groups have never participated in similar activities (e.g., formal consultations or decision-making processes, monitoring or surveillance of fishing areas or regulations, studies on fish stocks, fishing techniques and processing methods).

Despite their importance in the regional fishery sector, women's SSF groups in the Jubaland State seems to largely remain a silent constituency whose voice is not represented in formal umbrella organizations and whose interests are hardly represented when designing sectorial policies and

measures. Acknowledging these features, **technical government officers often contacted these groups to listen and provide support** thus offering alternative channels of communications. As shown in Figure 21, phone exchanges with government officers regularly occur for 53% of the groups (n=10), 41% of the groups (n=7) regularly received a field visit and 35% (n=6) were regularly invited to attend meetings or trainings.

Phone calls are the most appreciated channel of communication for women's SSF groups and 45% of the groups (n=9) agree that they would like government officers to always provide support and extension services via this channel.

Groups usually do not provide government departments with regular or annual reports on group activities. While this may partly be linked to the fact that most groups are still in the initial formation stage and might therefore lack structured reports, for other more formalized groups this is not the case. However, information gathered through the survey, do not allow to further explore the reasons behind the little sharing of activity reports.

3.1.11 Training

Training is not common among women's SSF groups in the Jubaland State. Only 38% of the groups (n=8) have received some form of technical training, the most common being marketing, administrative and processing techniques training. Trainings have been mainly provided by NGOs and Government departments (Table 4).

CONTENT OF THE TRAINING	NO. OF BENEFICIARY GROUPS	TYPE OF PROVIDER	EFFECTIVENESS
Marketing	7	NGO, Fisheries department	6 participants successfully put the training into practice
Administration	7	NGO, Government, Fisheries department, Other	1 participant was unsuccessful
Processing techniques	7	NGO, Government, Other	All participants successfully put the training into practice
Harvesting techniques	6	NGO, Government, Other	5 participants successfully put the training into practice
Financial management	5	NGO, Government	2 participants were unsuccessful
Environmental awareness or resource conservation	3	NGO, Government, Fisheries department	All participants successfully put the training into practice
Gender	1	NGO	All participants successfully put the training into practice

Table 4: Beneficiaries of training, providers and effectiveness

Overall, groups that received trainings successfully managed to put the knowledge acquired into practice and applied it in their daily activities. This finding points at the value of the trainings provided and their effectiveness, whereas the limited overall number of groups having received training suggests an area for further action.

3.2 Key strengths

Benefits of group membership are primarily economic.

Being part of a SSF group provides women with a better access to fish (52%, n=11) and a better access to the market (52%, n=11). This is consistent with the main reasons that stimulated the creation of the groups, namely to improve household welfare or livelihoods (see section 3.1.2).

Being consistent with the finding that only a limited number of groups have received trainings (see 3.1.11), only few groups reported that group membership created opportunities to receive technical trainings or knowledge (24%, n=5). Few groups also reported that being part of a group

contribute to receiving a voice to engage in decision-making (19%, n=4) or more empowerment or respect (14%, n=3). Groups generally do not seem to create better conditions to get equipment or to get social support (except for two groups) (Figure 23).

When asked about the main qualities or characteristics of the group, many reported the **mutual support and understanding** received by the members and the commitment to each other's mutual welfare. This suggests the importance for women to create small communities where their specificities and needs are recognized and where they can find ground for their self-development. As shown

Benefits of group membership (N=21)

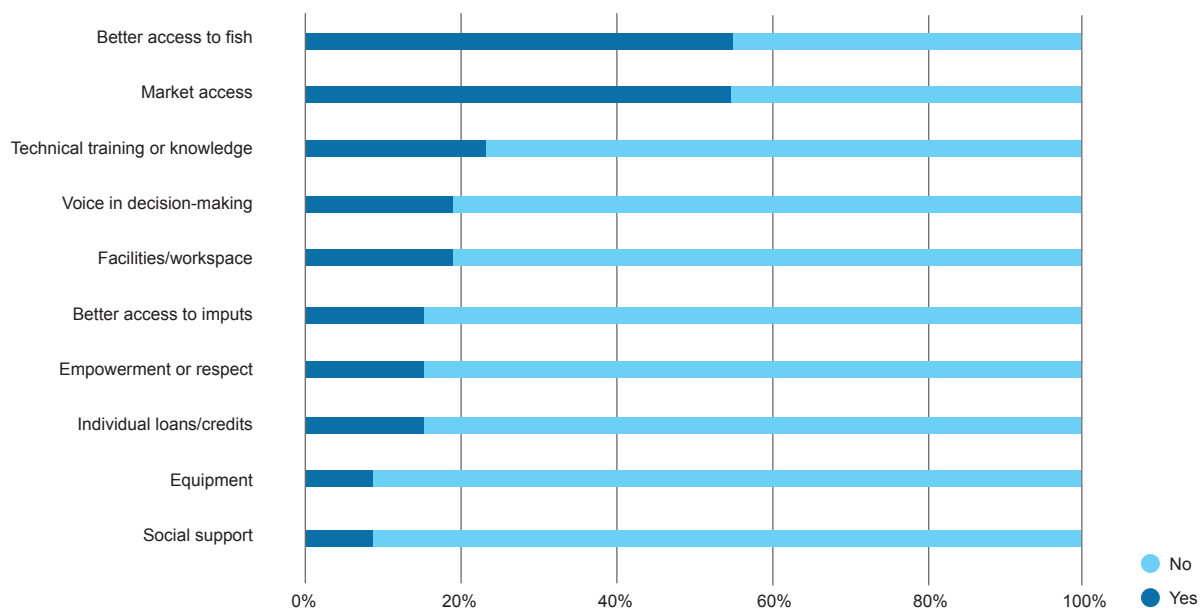


Figure 23: Benefits of group membership

above, being part of a SSF group does not seem to trigger more empowerment or inclusion in the society for women, yet. However, it seems to set the suitable conditions for future developments by providing a first level support to women that still face challenges in being heard and understood.

By joining in groups to perform processing and trading activities, women's SSF groups also consider that they have successfully contributed to the development of their local community, to the creation of a forum for discussion of their own problems and, though to a lesser extent, to the strengthening of the skills needed to operate in the fisheries sector.

3.3 Challenges and needs

Women's SSF organizations in Jubaland State face both internal and external barriers.

Internally, the biggest challenges (i.e., factors that are determined by the organization and its members) are linked to conflict resolution, poor market linkages, inadequate leadership skills and lack of equipment and storage space (Figure 24).

Externally, the biggest systematic challenges (i.e., factors in the local environment and political context which may affect the organization's ability to function) include lack of access to external credit and loans, inadequate government support, lack of access to landing site infrastructures, and absence of an enabling political environment in the village.

Recent adverse events such as the **Covid-19 outbreak**, or the **drought brought by climate change** developments represented a major threat for all organizations (except one). These events affected the availability of water to ensure hygiene standards in post-harvest activities and compromising social interactions as well as the export of products (Figure 25).

Internal barriers (N=26)

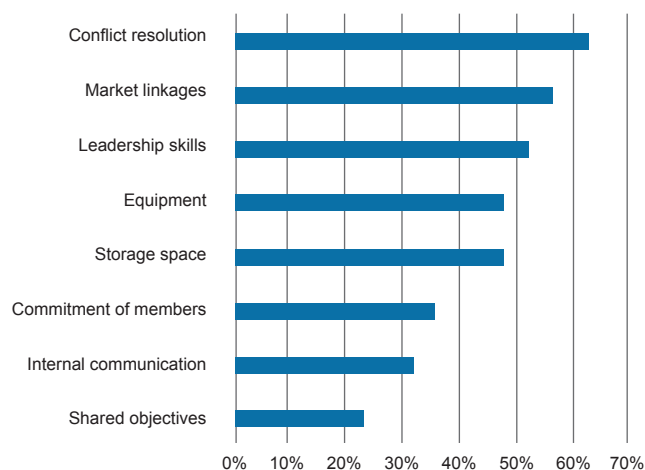


Figure 24: Internal barriers

External barriers (N=26)

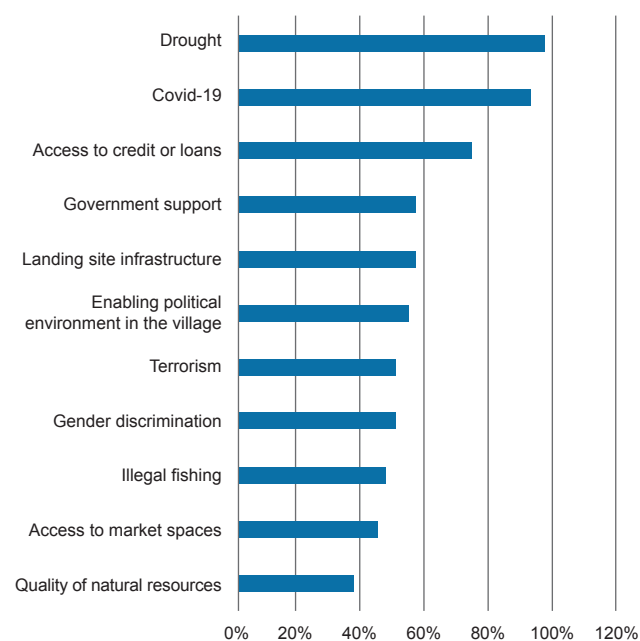


Figure 25: External barriers

Analysis of the data gathered from the interviews highlighted the **major needs** of women’s SSF organizations: **technical and organizational training, fishing equipment and financial support** (Figure 26). Training is needed on general business administration as well as on specific technical skills. When focusing on their practical work, organizations also need infrastructure and tools for fishing such as boats and nets, and for post-harvesting activities such as cold storage and safe water. Economically, organizations need financial support from external donors but at the same time they need to learn to be more self-sufficient. This requires access to soft loans and microfinance resources as well as investments in financial trainings.

Current needs reported by organizations

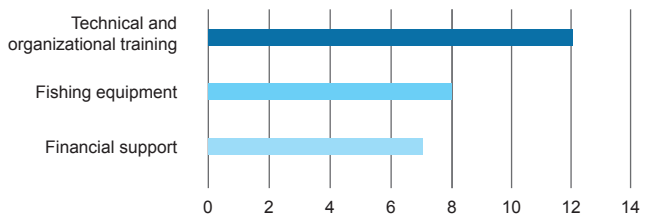


Figure 26: Current needs reported by organizations



4. Recommendations



The State of Jubaland is currently called upon to respond to one of the most critical challenges after thirty years of internal conflict: to professionalize the artisanal fishing sector (which to date has been relegated to being an alternative or residual activity to pastoralism) and, even more critical, to foster women's participation in fisheries organizations to improve women's livelihoods and support local and regional food and nutrition security. To achieve this paradigm shift, it is paramount to develop cooperation among women in the fisheries sector, who should move from being individual workers to an aggregation of artisanal or small-scale fishing operators. Over the years, the direct involvement of associations and cooperatives can make the sector grow and be a vital component in the decision-making process. Cooperatives represent a key tool to professionalize SSF on three levels: social (increasing employment), economic (market development and continued profitability for fishing operators), and environmental (mitigating illegal fishing and sharing the management plan for the conservation of the Jubaland's fish stock with State authorities). In this view actions are needed to further enhance the capacities of cooperatives, and more specifically women's cooperatives, in the region. This study draws a complex and multifaceted picture of women's SSF organizations in the Jubaland State. Primarily created to improve households welfare and livelihoods, these organizations provide a key space for women to meet, discuss their problems and find mutual support. Most of them have been recently established and are therefore still in the process of formalization or in the first steps of development. Not surprisingly internal rules and procedures are not always in place and only half of the organizations consider themselves financially independent. Despite that, access to external sources of finance (e.g., grants and loans) remains not common, thus suggesting the presence of other and more systemic types of barriers to the access to finance. In the Jubaland State, women's SSF organizations mainly focus their fisheries activities on trading and, to a lesser extent, processing of medium or large pelagic and demersal fish. Interestingly, if compared with similar organizations in other regions, women buy the fish from fishermen, thus suggesting that they are not directly related to fisherman (who otherwise would have provided them with the fish). This shows that women, regardless of their

families' linkages with fishing, see fisheries activities as a way to improve their living conditions. Groups tend to operate outside big umbrella organizations and significantly vary in terms of openness to external collaborations, with around half of the groups having regular interactions with other groups (mainly via phone or informal meetings) and the other half being more independent and reluctant to join wider umbrella organizations. Despite the differences in the key organizational characteristics, all groups face similar challenges in the access to key fishery assets and to trainings. Being part of a group does not seem to provide better access to these elements that, however, are considered key for the development of the group activities. Overall, full-female membership is highly valued. Sharing similar problems, communicating more easily and striving to empower women in the local communities are at the heart of their motivation, and groups generally share the willingness to continue to expand and develop. To this end, overcoming some key barriers and creating the right enabling conditions appears to be essential.

Building on the main issues that affect the activities of women's SSF groups in the Jubaland State (as highlighted in the previous chapter), the study identifies **five priority areas of intervention**:

1. Improve the internal organizational structures
2. Enhance access to credit
3. Invest in key infrastructures and assistance services
4. Develop technical and administration skills
5. Strengthen collaborations

The following sections illustrate these areas and illustrate for each one a list of recommended actions and some illustrative indicators to monitor and evaluate these actions.

4.1 Improve the internal organizational structures

ISSUES	ACTIONS RECOMMENDED	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39% of groups are still focusing on formalizing their activities. • Several groups are not registered correctly i.e., formally and with the relevant administration. • A significant part of the groups still lacks basic administrative structures and procedures: a legally recognized act of incorporation (constitution or by-law) (for 20% of the groups); a bank account (for 60% of the groups). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a census of SSF groups • Promotion of the Jubaland Fisheries Consortium • Adoption of tax relief mechanism for registered groups • Provision of assistance and information services for the registration • Creation of agreements with local banks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. of groups that are formally registered and that have a constitution or by-law. • N. of groups associated with the Jubaland Fisheries Consortium • Amount of tax relief deployed and n. of beneficiaries. • N. of groups requesting assistance, type of assistance requested and level of satisfaction of the requesting groups. • N. of banks offering services for free to groups • N. of groups having a bank account. • Level of satisfaction of groups on the access to banking services.

Table 5: Improve the internal organizational structures

As shown in section 3.1.1, a large part of groups lacks basic administrative structures and procedures. About 20% of groups reported not having a legally recognized act of incorporation (constitution or by-law) and about 60% do not have a bank account. In addition, several groups are not registered correctly i.e., formally and with the relevant administration.

Only a correct judicial registration provides the groups with rights and with formal recognition by other institutions and only groups that are correctly registered can benefit from state aid (if any). The current situation therefore means that only half of the groups could potentially benefit from public support.

As a result of this scenario, the main challenge is to fully legitimate the cooperatives of Jubaland as leading actors in the management of the professional artisanal fishing sector by formalizing their existence and improving their internal structures and procedures. This challenge is raised by both decentralized and regionalized management of the Jubaland State of Somalia and the greater involvement of coastal community stakeholders in the decision-making processes.

To this end, and as a first step, it is suggested that the Ministry of Fisheries takes a **census** of the groups operating

in the fisheries sector in the Jubaland State. This initiative should allow to identify all (or the majority) of the operating groups that can then be targeted with specific **information and awareness campaigns** to encourage them to formally register.

In parallel, the Jubaland Fisheries Consortium should also be promoted and linked to other cooperatives outside Kisimayo, to facilitate the identification of worker-members of each cooperative to counteract the undeclared work that might easily occur in situations where there is no systematic updating of members.

After the census, groups can also be encouraged to register the deed of incorporation through specific **tax relief mechanisms**. In addition, the local administration could provide **assistance** in becoming registered and give information on the possibilities for registered groups to get state aid (if any). This might further contribute to encouraging groups to proceed with the formal registration.

It is also recommended to **make an agreement with local banks** (with the guarantee, if possible, of international organizations that carry out cooperation activities in Somalia) to facilitate the opening of bank accounts and to make banking services free for SSF groups.

4.2 Enhance access to credit

ISSUES	ACTIONS RECOMMENDED	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of the groups cannot ensure their self-sufficiency. • Low propensity for outside financial support and only few groups received grants, loans, or in-kind support. • In half of the groups compliance with the rules on the membership fees remains a challenge and members rarely or never pay the membership fees. • Lack of access to external credit and loans is a big challenge for 73% of the organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of micro-credit opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. of groups that requested micro-credit • N. of groups that accessed micro-credit • N. of groups financially self-sufficient • Level of satisfaction of the groups on the functioning and value added of micro-credit

Table 6: Enhance access to credit

As shown in section 3.1.2, the main goal of the groups is to improve household income, living conditions and gender equality. This necessarily imply a motivation to enter the labor market and to progressively acquire more expertise and professionalism.

In pursuing this objective, access to financial resources proved to be a major challenge for all groups. Data show that only half of the groups consider themselves financially independent. While membership fees represent the main source of income, half of the groups still struggle in collecting the fees as their members rarely or never pay their contributions. Despite this situation, very few groups accessed external financial resources, thus suggesting that the existing mechanisms are somehow not suitable for these types of groups.

Women are at the heart of professional artisanal fishing in economic and social terms and providing them with a better access to a mix of external financial support (e.g., soft loans, grants) would help SSF groups to become more firmly established, have a better access to key assets, improve their working conditions, and help them accomplish their goals.

Micro-credit can generate progress and self-esteem among women. Offering micro-credit opportunities allows to better recognize women’s role and specificities and eventually fosters their empowerment. It can also strongly contribute to growing the whole fisheries sector as women are usually the key actors in the distribution, preservation, processing, and sale of fresh fish in the existing fishing cooperatives. Micro-credit opportunities can be activated through the National Fisheries Fund or other private or public funds from various international donors.

4.3 Invest in key infrastructures and assistance services

ISSUES	ACTIONS RECOMMENDED	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of the groups do not have access to a secure workspace. • 68% do not have access to dry storage space for keeping value-added fish products. • All groups that dry fish experience post-harvest loss due to pests and rain. • 57% do not have access to cold storage space (e.g., coolers with ice or electricity) for keeping fresh fish. • Most organizations do not have transportation equipment. • Lack of equipment is a big challenge for 38% of the organizations. • Only 7% of groups receive social support (e.g., to cover illness) from their group membership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in key infrastructure for processing and storage (with a focus on the cold chain) • Foster a network of care and assistance services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. of groups having access to processing and storage facilities • Types of processing and storage facilities and related health and safety conditions • Extent to which the infrastructures meet the needs of the groups • Type of assistance services offered to working women and conditions for access • N. of working women requesting and accessing those services • Level of satisfaction of working women on the assistance services received

Table 7: Invest in key infrastructure and assistance services

Data collected show that women's groups have limited access to the key assets that are needed to perform fisheries activities (see section 3.1.6). Access to storage facilities (dry or cold storage) is limited and most groups do not have transportation equipment to move fisheries products to the selling points.

It is therefore recommended to **invest in key infrastructures**, improving landing sites, fish processing plants and cold chain, processing and storage facilities (which should be sheltered from rain or other climatic condition), fostering the necessary hygienic and sanitary conditions for fish processing.

The analysis showed that groups often have preservation issues, especially the ones from the river areas and lots of food is being wasted because of this.

Technological improvements in post-harvest processing would help groups address their current post-harvest processing challenges: for example, access to higher drying racks and a dry garage area may help to cope with post-harvest waste and theft thus limiting product loss. Access to

more advanced ovens and higher airflow during fish smoking could help to cope with difficult situations associated with oven technology, smoke, and access to firewood.

Also, in case fish is not processed and is freshly sold, further investments are needed to **extend the cold chain**. The Jubaland coastline is very long (340 km approx.) and having only one ice making machine in the Alanley Market in Kismayo⁷ appears not enough to serve all the districts and villages along the coastline where SSF groups are located (e.g., the town of Badhadhe is 160 km away from Kismayo). This is particularly true considering the difficulties of moving around and the lack of suitable transportation means (bicycles, etc.).

In the short term, it might also be useful to **map existing international cooperation activities and initiatives**, by identifying their focus and needs, to properly set the priority areas of investment and to create bridges between SSF women's groups and international cooperation stakeholders where relevant. This could generate an optimization of resources and eventually accelerate the growth and development in the coastal region of Jubaland.

⁷ The machine is not active at the moment due to battery problems.

Besides providing access to key infrastructure, complementary welfare services are needed to allow women to perform their fisheries-related activities while keeping their social responsibilities in their families and in the local community. Data collected through the survey show that only 7% of the groups benefit from some form of social assistance. Empowering women represents a process of

cultural and social change for the Somali population and acknowledging women’s specificities is one needed step. In this view it is suggested to **foster a network of care and assistance services** for working women by setting up a school network for their children, and if they are already present, by implementing shifts and giving rights to free admission.

4.4 Develop technical and administration skills

ISSUES	ACTIONS RECOMMENDED	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the successful results achieved, training remains not common and only 38% of the groups have received some form of training. • Training (both technical and administration-related) is one of the key needs expressed by the groups. • Conflict resolution and poor leadership skills are among the big challenges faced by 62% and 42% of the organizations respectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training courses (both technical courses on specific fisheries related activities and general business management courses) • Implement awareness raising and communication campaigns on training possibilities • Set up Desk Offices for technical assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N and type of trainings offered to groups • Conditions to access the trainings • N. of women group members attending the trainings • Level of satisfaction of women attending the training on the content and deployment of the training • Volume and type of information material produced on training possibilities and related channels of distribution • Outreach of the information and awareness campaigns • N. of Desk Offices created • N. and type of requests received by the Desk Offices

Table 8: Develop technical and administration skills

Most of the time, as the Somali population is a population of pastoralists, they often improvise themselves as fishery operators and do not have the required skills set to professionally undertake fisheries-related activities. This skill gap is especially important for women who are mainly involved in fish processing and preservation activities because it has a significant impact on food quality and health.

Data collected during the study show a big appetite of women’s SSF groups for improving their competencies and developing their skills in relation to both technical fisheries activities and business administration. There are still very few groups that have benefitted from trainings and the positive results achieved through them suggest

that a wider training campaign may positively contribute to empowering women. To create new local markets and improve existing ones, it is therefore recommended to initiate re-skilling and up-skilling **training courses** on both fish production and processing, and business administration.

Drawing on the needs expressed by women interviewed during the study and the knowledge of the overarching sector in the region, technical courses may focus on:

- Packaging, storage, and transportation: techniques on how to store fish in ice boxes, deep freeze, and ice chiller to prevent damage in fish due to inappropriate cooling, handling, stacking of fish, loading, and unloading to minimize damage.

- Traditional artisanal processing: the technique of fish drying in sun; removing of guts and cleaning of fish; the process of sun drying; packaging of sun-dried fish.
- Mechanized processing: use of a machine to make fish fillet; storage of fish in chillers; IQF blast freezing technique; packaging for the export destination; mechanized process of fish canning etc.

Technical training can be implemented by food safety experts and should target groups that carry out different activities (and not only fisheries) in light of the mix of activities (i.e., Pastoral and fisheries) often undertaken by Somali groups.

To trigger the participation of women in the proposed technical trainings, it is suggested to launch in parallel **awareness-raising and communication campaigns** through social networks and dissemination material. Campaigns could take place in schools, meeting places, places of worship, etc.

It is also recommended to conduct short business management courses in the form of “information days” on the administrative, financial and commercial aspects of cooperatives (micro-credit, opening bank accounts, grants, state aid, taxation, commercial aspects, etc.). Besides informa-

4.5 Strengthen collaborations

As shown in section 3.1.10, women’s SSF groups in the Jubaland State mainly operate outside regional or national umbrella organizations and they have mixed opinions when asked if it would be beneficial for their group to join a wider organization. If joining wider organizations may bring advantages to some groups, this is not considered to be the case for all groups. Groups that show propensity to join wider groups are also those that have established regular contacts with other women’s organizations or fisherfolk groups thus suggesting a higher openness to external linkages.

When joining or creating a group, women especially appreciated the mutual assistance received and the possibility to share common problems with other women in a free and secure space.

tion sessions on the main administrative and management aspects of a cooperative, it is also recommended to deploy trainings on group governance and leadership to support those groups that reported to experience challenges in conflict resolution, leadership skills, member commitment and shared objectives (see section 3.3). These courses can be carried out by NGOs located in Jubaland and by the Ministry of Fisheries or relevant offices.

As a good practice, it is suggested to urge the Ministry of Fisheries or the relevant public authorities to strengthen training courses, most of which are currently provided by NGOs and international organizations.

In the short term, **Desk Offices** can also be set up at the district level to provide technical assistance to the groups. Besides providing answers to specific technical or administrative problems, these offices would network with all the direct and indirect actors involved in small-scale fisheries (i.e., associations, NGOs, research bodies, universities, etc.) to launch awareness-raising campaigns aimed at fisheries groups on the need to move to a new phase of development and on the available training opportunities that they can seize.

It may be therefore possible that opening the group to wider organizations or other fisherfolks groups may not be attractive to women who might find it difficult to re-create the same conditions. Cooperatives represent a territorial stronghold for women and any effort to establish new forms of collaboration should acknowledge the key strengths of the existing small-scale groups and build on them.

To professionalize the artisanal fishing sector in the Jubaland State and ensure diversification of local food supply, there is the need to build networks of cooperatives (especially among women) that operate in both agricultural and fishery sectors. Networks have the potential to improve the access of individual groups to key assets, to trainings and to alternative sources of financial support and eventu-

ISSUES	ACTIONS RECOMMENDED	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups usually operate alone and outside existing national or regional umbrella organizations. • There are interactions with other women's organizations or fisherfolk groups, but these remain limited to around half of the groups and occur informally through phone calls and meetings. • All except three groups have never participated in fisheries management or governance activities. • Inadequate government support is a big challenge for 58% of the organizations. • Contacts with technical government officers are not systematic for around half of the groups. • 75% of the groups do not share regular or annual activity reports with the government departments. • Poor market linkages are a big challenge for 58% of the organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Jubaland Fisheries Consortium • Promote associations providing technical assistance • Increase exchanges with the Ministry of Fisheries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. of groups associated with the Jubaland Fisheries Consortium • N. of associations providing technical assistance and n. of associates • Type and frequency of exchanges occurring among groups (within and outside existing associations or organizations) • Involvement of groups in fisheries management or governance activities • Type and frequency of exchanges with technical government officers • Level of satisfaction of groups on the existing cooperation and exchanges

Table 9: Strengthen collaborations

ally they would allow existing groups to grow and develop their skills faster. The creation of networks of SSF groups could also contribute to empowering women by better representing their interests at the local level and in the fisheries management or governance activities. Aggregating interests around networks and associations would make the social dialogue easier and will favor the dissemination of good practices and knowledge, thus promoting the generational change that fishing cooperatives needs.

To make this happen, and to create the favorable ground for the creation of new collaborations among groups, **existing cooperation structures should be first valued and promoted** before building new ones. In this view, particular attention should be given to the Jubaland Fisheries Consortium as the main organization that provides support to groups and facilitate the relationship with the Ministry of Fisheries. Joining the Jubaland Fisheries Consortium would also allow women, who are pivotal in many contexts of fishers' families and work organizations, to benefit from the Jubaland Consortium fund as an additional source of income to cover the group expenses. Strengthening existing higher-level structures and ensur-

ing they are providing benefits (e.g., training, and access to loans) could help strengthen women's SSF groups. In parallel, promoting learning exchanges and connectivity among existing women's SSF groups should be prioritized to give continuity to existing relationships and showing benefits deriving from the exchanges to the groups that still operate in an isolated manner.

It is also recommended to promote associations that could offer technical assistance services to cooperatives and union training courses.

Relationships with the Ministry of Fisheries may also be strengthened as for around half of the groups contacts with technical government officials are not systematic and reports on the group activities are rarely shared. While several groups attend an annual meeting with the Jubaland Ministry of Fisheries, phone contacts remain the preferred channel of communication for women's SSF groups.

5. Photo Gallery



Figure 27: Women on the beach.



Figure 30: A woman in the working space.



Figure 28: Administration of the questionnaire.



Figure 31: A woman dragging fish.



Figure 29: Administration of the questionnaire.



Figure 32: A woman in the working space.

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