

The Republic of The Gambia

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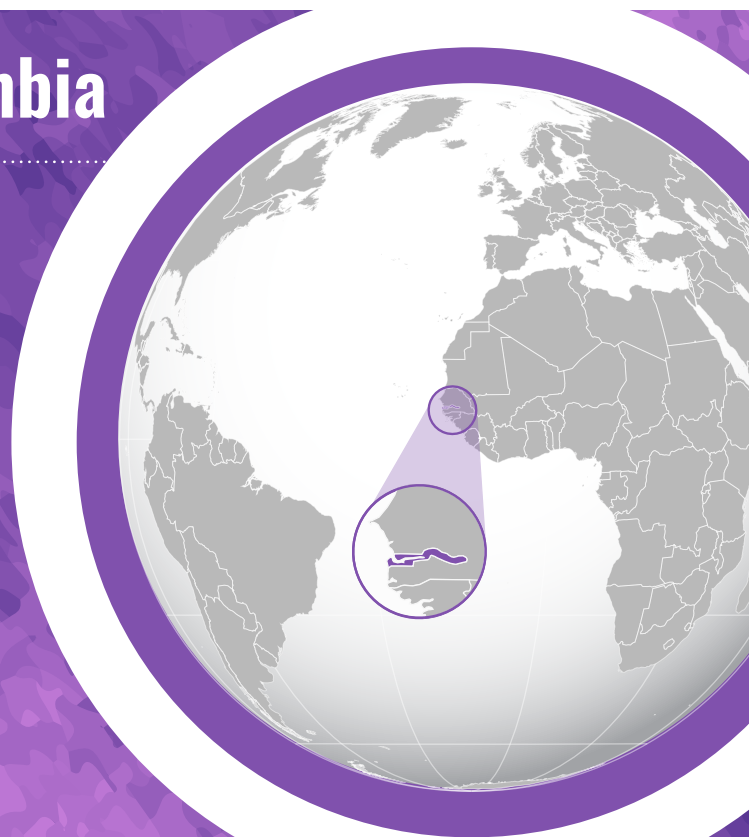
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Women in The Gambia play critical roles in fisheries. They contribute to over half of processing and trading activities in both the artisanal and industrial fisheries sub-sectors. They also account for the vast majority of wild shellfish harvesters and are key stake and rights holders in its management. Women are food and income providers and caregivers within their family units.

Despite such, there are significant gender gaps at a national level, as women have limited access to financial, judicial, educational, and medical resources, lack adequate representation in government, and are subject to violence.

The state government has made strides in developing legal frameworks for gender equality, however ethnic

and religious practices reinforce alternative governance structures, making it difficult to implement and achieve gender equality.

This fact sheet provides an overview of the role of seafood production in The Gambia, with a focus on gender dimensions, and is a starting point for conversations about how to support gender equity and equality in the sector and beyond. Our hope and intent is to update this document and incorporate new information and perspectives as they arise. It is part of a series meant to offer development agency employees, government agencies, NGOs, funders, and researchers with a snapshot of gender and fisheries to inform the planning and delivery of relevant activities these actors might be involved in or are in the process of developing.

Fisheries production

Total annual fish production (excluding aquaculture) reported by the Department of Fisheries in 2014 was 56,270 tonnes (with 51,500 tonnes in the artisanal sector and 4,770 tonnes in the industrial sector) and in 2015 was reported to be 53,719 tonnes.^{1,2} Not reflected in these figures is industrial catch caught by foreign fleets in Gambian waters and landed elsewhere.

The Sea Around Us estimated total annual marine capture production for the year 2019 from Gambian fleets as follows: ³

- ▶ Marine subsistence (2019) – 6,791 tonnes
- ▶ Marine commercial (2019) – 74,366 tonnes (artisanal); no industrial fishing, and no fishing on the high seas were conducted by Gambian fleets.
- ▶ For that same year, total industrial catches in Gambia's Exclusive Economic Zone by foreign fleets were estimated at 86,625 tonnes, with Senegal accounting for 87% of these catches and Spain 7%.

Red sole (*Cynoglossus senegalensis*), black sole (*Dagetichthys cadenati*), Bonga shad (*Ethmalosa fimbriata*) and Sardinellas are some of the most commonly harvested species³, while Sardinellas and a variety of demersal species are targeted by industrial fleets.³ Most sole fish are processed and exported to markets in the European Union.⁴

Fish consumption

The Department of Fisheries reported national fish consumption at 28.4 kg per person per year in 2018⁵, while the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimated apparent fish consumption⁶ at 25.17 kg per person per year in 2020⁷. Coastal and inland per capita fish consumption differs by about 9 kg, due to constraints with distribution and affordability. More than 50% of the national population depends on fisheries for animal protein, with 90% of fish consumption supplied by the domestic small-scale fisheries sector.⁵

Economic contribution to GDP

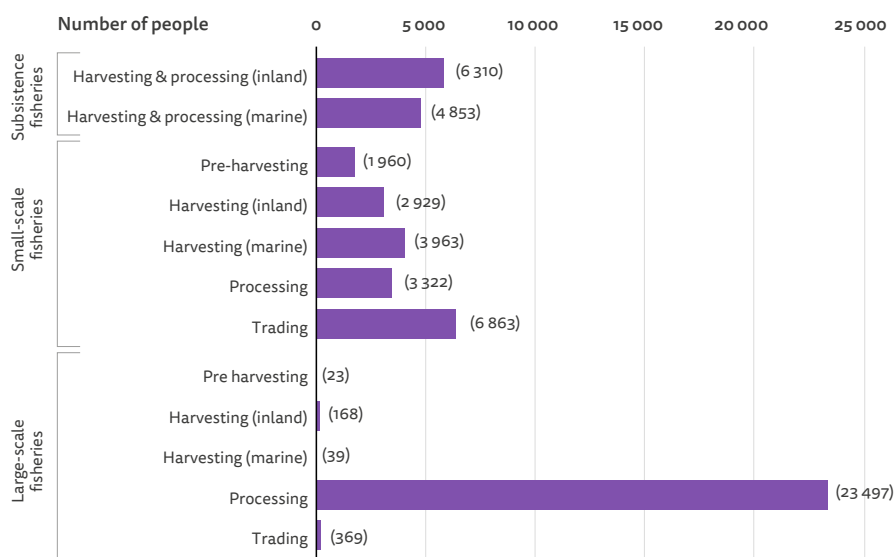
The fisheries sector was estimated to have contributed 6.2% to national GDP in 2018^{2,8}, compared to 2% in 2014.¹ Fisheries is the third largest food production sector, after agriculture and livestock, yet is the largest source of animal protein in most Gambian diets.¹

Employment contribution (all)

According to the Department of Fisheries, the artisanal and industrial sub-sectors provide direct and indirect employment to 25,000-30,000 people and about 2,000 people, respectively.⁹ The government estimated in 2018 that the livelihoods of about 200,000 people are critically dependent on fisheries and related activities, thus employing around 7% of the total population.⁹

The fishing sector is comprised of Gambian citizens and foreign nationals from Senegal, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. Estimates indicate that out of the 416 head fishers operating along the productive Atlantic coast, 60% were foreign nationals.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the Illuminating Hidden Harvests (IHH)¹¹ Initiative estimated that a total of 31,291 individuals¹² engage in the fishery sector (2022), spanning both inland and marine fisheries, including pre-and post-harvest as well as subsistence fishing activities, and with most individuals involved in the marine small-scale and subsistence fisheries sub-sectors (see graph below). The IHH also estimated that a total of approximately 130,849 people depend, at least partly, on fisheries or subsistence fishing: 83,240 in small-scale fisheries, 43,523 in subsistence fisheries and 4,085 in large scale fisheries.¹³

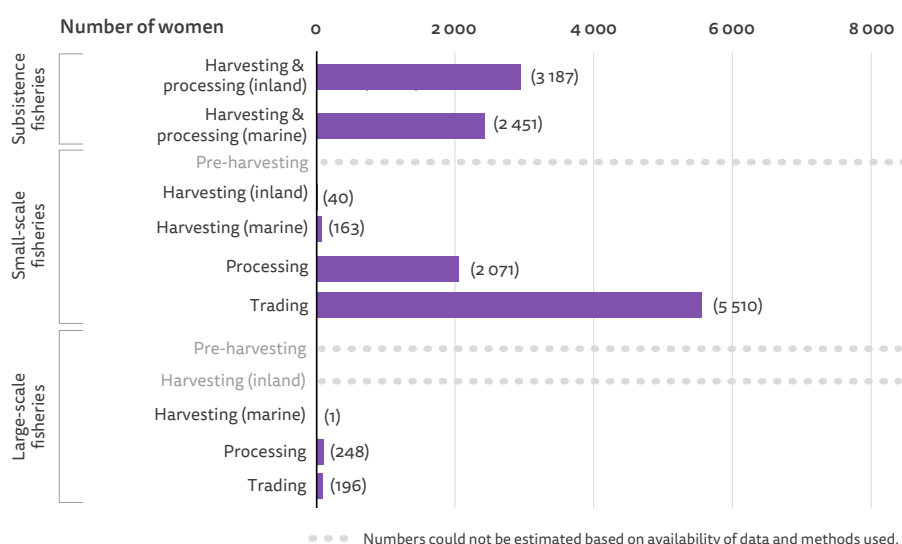


Employment contribution (women)

Some estimates suggest that women are responsible for 80% of fish processing and 50% of fish trading activities linked to small-scale fisheries (SSF) in The Gambia¹⁹, while accounting for 70% of fish packing and processing in the industrial (large scale) sub-sector.¹⁰

The IHH initiative estimated that 13,868 women are active in fisheries, with the small-scale sector providing the greatest source of livelihoods for women. The initiative found that women are more likely than men to engage in subsistence fishing, representing 51% of the total number of people engaged in subsistence fisheries. They also play a key role in the processing and trading of fish, accounting for 62% and 80% of individuals active in these fisheries sub-sectors, respectively, across small-scale fisheries (SSF) value chains, while in the large-scale subsector, women make up 50% of those in processing and 53% of those in trading activities.

“13,868 women are active in fisheries, with the small-scale sector providing the greatest source of livelihoods for women”



Women play critical roles across fisheries value chains in The Gambia. Women often purchase fresh fish (bonga, white fish, and catfish) from local fishers (often men) and fish mongers (called 'Bana Bana'), add value through further processing via smoking, salting, and/or sun drying, then sell the

products to consumers or retailers for local, national, and international markets.¹⁰ Traditionally, women transport fish from boats to trucks and receive bongo shad as payment, which they sell in inland markets. However, in recent years, immigrant men, often from Mali, have displaced women in this activity by using wheelbarrows to move fish from boats to trucks, resulting in women receiving fewer shad as compensation. This reduces the amount of product they can sell and also negatively impacts their families' food supply.¹⁰

Both men and women are involved in processing fish for sale, but women tend to produce hot-smoked products while men focus on dry-smoked ones. Hot-smoked products have a short shelf life of 1-3 days (compared to 3-9 months for dry-smoked), which puts women's products at a higher risk of spoilage if not sold promptly. Women sell their products in various markets, including domestic, urban, and inland, as well as within the diaspora trade.¹⁴

Harvesting, processing, and selling wild oyster (*Crassostrea tulipa*) and cockle is primarily or entirely run by women, specifically of the Jola, Balanto, and Manjago ethnic groups.¹⁰ Harvesting is undertaken by paddling a dugout canoe, or wading out, to collection sites. Oysters grow on mangrove prop roots, and matured individuals are removed with an axe or cutlass. Cockles live in sandy bottom habitats and are combed for with fingers and spoons. These shellfish fisheries are particularly important in Tanbi National Park, the Allahein "Bolong" in Kartong, and the north bank villages of Tambana and Bakang, and Kemoto in the Lower River Region.⁹ Initiatives have focused efforts on the oyster sector, aiming to increase the production of small-scale producers, including through aquaculture, and to strengthen the role of women (see 'programmes or initiatives' below).¹⁶

Social considerations

The Gambia is a patriarchal society, where men traditionally hold the position of head of the household and have complete control. However, prior to colonial rule, in centralised and non-centralised societies, adult women often wielded political, spiritual, and professional authority.¹⁷ Women and girls are socialized to accept a subordinate status, which is particularly evident in Muslim communities. The societal expectations that women are inferior to men make it challenging for them to find business partners and investors¹⁴, and limits their access to credit, markets, and support services.¹¹³ Although female-headed households (15.3% of all households in 2008)¹⁶ have lower poverty rates than men, women still experience higher overall poverty levels than men. Women are responsible for child health care, education, and overseeing all housework.¹⁸ However, The Gambia is ethnically diverse, and specific norms and economic divisions can differ accordingly.¹⁶ Geographic variations also exist with women in urban areas having more independence than in rural areas.

In the Gambia, women account for a small portion (9.4%) of skilled labor but make up the majority (62%) of unskilled labor. On average, women earn significantly less than men, with men's per capita income being four times higher than that of women.¹⁶ Men predominantly own land, while women can only obtain user rights, which they can pass down to their daughters. Efforts by the Classroom Construction Program, which established school grounds close to communities so that children would not walk more than 3 km to attend, has increased school attendance rates for girls. Grade 6 completion rate is high for both girls and boys, however girls are less likely to enroll in secondary and tertiary education, and adult women have lower literacy rates (51%) compared to men (65%).¹⁹ Understanding and

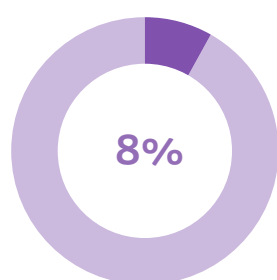
addressing feedback loops between education, literacy, training, and pay for women are essential to achieving gender equity and equality.

Kinship networks are a strong source of social security. Large family units cooperate in economic exchange and childcare. Additionally, “kafos” exist as “village-based interest organizations”, which serve social, political, or economic functions and have proven to be important for women collaboration, empowerment, and support.¹⁶

Women’s rights and political empowerment

Under article 28 of the 1997 Constitution (amended in 2002), women in The Gambia are accorded equal rights to men. However, there are three different legal systems operating in the Gambia: civil, customary and Sharia. As most Gambians (over 90%) are Muslim, Sharia and customary law prevail in personal matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.²⁰ Under Sharia and customary law, polygamy is legal and widely practiced and early marriage continues to be widespread, with a quarter of the young female population married before age 18.^{22,21} Customary or Sharia law may also be discriminatory against women in matters of inheritance – however, by those who abide to this religion, the matter is not seen as discrimination, but rather as equitable, and rightful by law and practice. Such cultural and religious norms make gender equality and implementation of state obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) challenging.²²

The State party has made efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality. Legislative reforms have included the National Policy for Advancement of Gambian Women (1990-2009), which was updated with the implementation of the National Gender and Women Empowerment Policy (2010-2020); adoption of the Women’s Act in 2010, which focuses on broad based gender issues and women’s empowerment; adoption of the Sexual Offences Act 2013, which criminalized sexual harassment in the workplace; the Women’s (Amendment) Act in 2015, which prohibits female genital mutilation; the Children’s Amendment Act on the prohibition of Child Marriage in 2016, which establishes the minimum age for marriage as 18 years old; and the establishment of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare in 2019, intended to implement gender policy.²² However, concerns remain, including that the provisions of CEDAW have not yet been fully incorporated into national legislation – a required step to ensure the implementation of the Convention; that discriminatory provisions against women remain in the Constitution and in national legislation, in particular regarding women’s rights in marriage and family relations, which are justified by the State party on customary and religious grounds; and that there is a lack of implementation of laws on women’s rights at the national, regional, and local levels.²¹ In addition, although women have been granted equal rights in decision-making, prevailing social and cultural norms have created barriers for women’s participation in public and political arenas.¹⁶



Percentage of women in the National Assembly in 2022

As of December 2022, women occupy just 8% of seats (5 out of a total of 58) in the National Assembly, ranking The Gambia 167th out of 187 ranked countries.²² Out of 22 cabinet ministers in the government, four are women, namely: Claudiana Cole (Minister of Basic and Secondary Education), Fatou Kinteh (Minister of Gender, Children and Social Welfare), Rohey John Manjang (Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources), and Isatou Touray (Minister of Health and Social Welfare). Within the local government, 7 out of 119 elected councilors are women. In the legal sector,

female representation is improving but not yet equal, with 7 out of 21 Judges in the Superior court being women, and one woman judge in the Supreme Court.²³

“Within the local government, 7 out of 119 elected councilors are women”

In the absence of a comprehensive law and weak enforcement of existing laws addressing specific forms of violence, gender-based violence, including domestic violence and rape, continues to be widespread.²⁰ In The Gambia, 9% of women between ages 15 to 49 report having experienced sexual violence, while almost 40% of married women have been subjected to either physical, sexual, or emotional violence by current or most recent partners.²³ Domestic violence and rape are commonly regarded as family matters, with traditional approaches often used to “resolve” these issues within the community.¹⁶ There is also a lack of knowledge of existing legislation, insufficient support services and legal assistance for victims, and a prevailing culture of silence, fear, and shame.²² Research indicates that most violence cases submitted for legal action are ultimately withdrawn.¹⁶ Moreover, female genital mutilation (locally known as niaka, kuyungo, musolula karoola, and bondo) continues to be a pervasive practice, especially in rural areas, and is defended by traditional and religious leaders.²⁴ Estimates indicate that 76% of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone the practice²⁵, and about 51% of girls up to the age of 14.²⁷ Efforts are underway to involve men – seen as the decision-makers – in combating this harmful practice.

Several government agencies, civil society organizations, and non-governmental organizations have made gender equality a key concern and are working towards the empowerment of women through awareness raising, gender mainstreaming, and legal intervention. Such groups include Female Lawyers Association of The Gambia, Think Young Women, The Girls Agenda, Safe Hands for Girls, Network of Gender Journalists, Network against Gender Based Violence, and the Sexual and Gender Based Violence Unit of the Ministry of Justice.²⁷ Although these organizations are not specifically related to fisheries, their efforts can have a direct impact on the development, voice, and wellbeing of women working in the fisheries sector.

Key frameworks promoting gender equality and their ratification status

- ✓ Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Treaty ratified in 1993.²⁷ The Gambia submitted its 6th periodic report in 2020.²⁸
- ✓ The Gambia has not ratified CEDAW’s Optional Protocol.³⁰
- ✗ Beijing Platform for Action (1995) with national review submitted in 2019.²⁹
- ✓ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol) ratified in 2005.³⁰

Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)

Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality and ranges from 0 for no discrimination to 1 for very high discrimination. With an aggregated index value of 0.48 in 2023, The Gambia was ranked as having overall high levels of gender discrimination in social institutions.

Year	Total aggregated index value (Category) ³¹	Discrimination in the family	Restricted physical integrity	Restricted access to productive & financial resources	Restricted civil liberties
2014 ³²	0.524 (v.High)	0.5131 (High)	0.8509 (v.High)	1 (v. High)	0.7953 (v.High)
2019	NA	0.88 (v. High)	0.45 (High)	NA	0.48 (High)
2023 ³³	0.48 (High)	0.665 (v. High)	0.316 (Med.)	0.474 (High)	0.435 (High)

Africa Gender Index (AGI)

Value (2019)³⁴

0.353

(on a scale from 0 to 1, with a score of 1 representing parity between women and men)

Rank (2019)

44

(out of 51 countries)

Gender Inequality Index (GII)

Value (2021)³⁵

0.611

(on a scale from 0, where women and men fare equally, to 1, where one gender fares as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions)

Global Rank (2019)

153

(out of 170 countries)

Women in fisheries governance

Of the 17 legislative texts reviewed, eight mention women and gender. There is a strong overall emphasis on gender as a crosscutting issue in fisheries specifically, and natural resource management in general.³⁶

The **Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy** highlights the gendered nature of the sector and aims to increase participation by women and youth in the sector, increase access to land and water resources, increase contributions from women and youth to resource management, wealth creation, and security of investments along with property rights, and improve the design and deployment of gender-sensitive processing technologies.

The **Gambia National Development Plan** has eight priorities, one of them being modernizing agriculture and fisheries to reduce poverty and increase food security. The plan also has seven cross-cutting enablers, one of which is to empower women. Recognizing that the welfare of Gambian women still lags significantly behind that of men, to promote gender equity, equality, and women's empowerment, the government aims to support gender mainstreaming, capacity development of women entrepreneurs, legislative reforms, and programs to address gender-based violence.

The **Supplementary Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy** aims to promote sustainable development of fishing for food security and poverty reduction and integrate gender mainstreaming and climate change across all sectoral frameworks.

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan highlights the need to strengthen national capacity and address knowledge gaps regarding biodiversity, emphasizing the importance of gender mainstreaming. The plan highlights the need to ensure participation of local women and men in helping reverse the loss and unsustainable use of biodiversity.

The **Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Strategy** prioritizes fish for economic growth and poverty reduction, with a specific focus on gendered poverty, and emphasizes the need for gender-sensitive policies and interventions to support empowerment of sector players, including women. In 2013, the Ministry and Department of Fisheries entered into a co-management agreement with the National Sole Fishery Co-management Committee (NASCOM) and the TRY Oyster Women's Association (TRY), to build capacity among stakeholders, and improve linkages with other sectors in an effort to increase employment and reduce poverty, particularly for women (see "Programmes or initiatives aiming to advance gender equality in fisheries" below).

"The government aims to support gender mainstreaming, capacity development of women entrepreneurs, legislative reforms, and programs to address gender-based violence"

The **Second Generation National Agricultural Investment Plan** aims to increase food and nutrition security and improve livelihoods through sustainable management of natural resources. The plan recognizes bottlenecks in production and post-harvest phases of the value chain and emphasizes the empowerment of women and youth for increased production and poverty reduction. Strategies include improving access to supplies, facilities, credit, and support services for women processors and traders of crops and fish, with specific interventions on capacity development regarding fish smoking and drying. Additionally, efforts include improving maternal nutrition, addressing land tenure issues, and providing training.

The **Trade Policy** aims to stimulate sustainable supply and productive capacities through technology, agro-processing, and skills development, recognizing fisheries as a priority sector, and with a focus on women and youth to accelerate economic development.

The **Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy** aims to overcome challenges in the sector to increase growth while contributing to food, income, and nutrition security for poverty reduction and national development. It includes a gender mainstreaming policy focus focused on land tenure, access to credit, technologies targeting women and youth, reliable sources of water, and training. Within this focus, there is no specific mention of fisheries. However, the fisheries sector has its own policy strand and is aimed at optimizing value-addition, export earnings, employment opportunities, and nutrition.

Legislative Text	Year
<i>Fisheries Marketing Corporation Act, as amended</i>	1980
<i>Fisheries Act (Act No. 10)</i>	1991
<i>National Environmental Management Act</i>	1994
<i>Fisheries Regulations (L. N. No. 18)</i>	1995
<i>Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations (L.N. No. 41)</i>	1996
<i>Fisheries Act</i>	2007
<i>Fisheries Regulations (No. 2008-6)</i>	2008

Legislative Text	Year
<i>National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015 – 2020)</i>	2011
<i>Fishery Co-Management Plan for The Gambia Sole Complex</i>	2012
<i>Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Policy (2017-2026)</i>	2017
<i>Gambia National Development Plan (2018-2021)</i>	2017
<i>Supplementary Agriculture and Natural Resource (ANR) Policy - Final Validated Policy</i>	2017
<i>Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Strategy 2017-2021</i>	2017
<i>Trade Policy 2018-2022</i>	2018
<i>Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy</i>	2018
<i>Second Generation National Agricultural Investment Plan-Food and Nutrition Security (2019-2026)</i>	2019
<i>Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Gambia</i>	2019

Threats and drivers of change in fisheries

Several key threats to and drivers of change in The Gambia's coastal ecosystems and encouraging examples of how these may be addressed are outlined below. While threats and drivers of change to fisheries may have specific gender dimensions associated with them, gender integration is necessary in efforts to improve adaptation, and foster resilience in the face of change.

► **Fishmeal** is a prominent and growing industry in West Africa, with fifty processing plants in the region, including three in The Gambia. One plant in The Gambia processes 7,500 tonnes of fish per year. Gambian waters are fished by industrial trawlers that primarily take the fish to foreign ports for processing. This industry poses a direct threat to local livelihoods and food security, as the fish used for fishmeal, such as bonga shad, is also critical for small-scale fishers.^{10,37} This issue is of particular concern in Gunjur and Tanji, where declines in fish have left women with less fish to process, sell in the markets, and feed their families.^{38,39} Additionally, much of this fishing is **illegal, unreported, and unregulated**, with trawlers operating within the nine nautical-mile-wide area reserved for small-scale fishers and failing to meet operating standards.⁴⁰ Fishmeal processing plants also produce and have been found to be illegally releasing pollutants into surrounding lagoon and coastal waters.⁴³

A **lack of access** to fisheries infrastructure, including ports, cold storage, and distribution and market systems presents a barrier to the sustainable development of the sector in general⁴¹, and to women especially, who must travel long distances to reach markets to sell their product, and experience high post-harvest losses via spoilage.¹⁶

► **Coastal habitats face numerous threats** in The Gambia. Fishmeal processing plants have released high and unsafe levels of phosphates and nitrates (up to 40 times the amount deemed safe), into lagoon and coastal waters, with reports noting fish die-offs, the disappearance of birds, and ecosystem change.⁴³ Coastal aquaculture development,

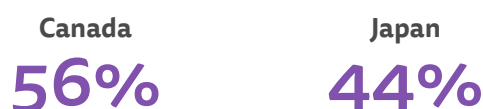
“The fishmeal industry puts local livelihoods and food security at risk as the fish used is critical to small-scale fishers”

particularly shrimp farming, poses a threat to mangrove forests and wetland habitats that are important for wild shellfish harvesting and vegetable gardening, respectively. Mangrove forests are also under threat from destructive oyster collection and firewood collection, as their wood is the main source of cooking fuel and heavily used for fish salting and smoking.⁴² Growing urbanization, beach sand mining, and inadequate sanitation further contribute to structural changes and increasing nutrient loads.¹⁶

- Increased temperature, decreased rainfall, and rising sea levels as a result of **climate change** are likely to exacerbate existing challenges related to food security, water scarcity, and coastal erosion.⁴³ Part of existing declines in fisheries productivity are likely already the result of climate-induced changes⁴⁴ and projected to continue. Rising sea levels could result in the loss of coastal habitats and displacement of coastal communities. The Gambia is also expected to experience more frequent and severe weather events, such as droughts and floods, which could further strain the country's limited resources and infrastructure.

Gender in ODA allocation for fisheries

Between 2010 and 2019, Gambia received a total of USD1.5 million in fisheries Official Development Assistance (ODA), USD0.1 million (9%) of which was earmarked to support gender equality focused fisheries projects (i.e., tagged with gender markers 1 or 2⁴⁵).^{46,47} This latter sum represents 0.1% of gender-focused fisheries allocations to Sub-Saharan Africa. For the period under consideration, all gender focused financing was provided by Canada (56%) and Japan (44%).



Programmes or initiatives aiming to advance gender equality in fisheries

Given the critical role of oyster and cockle harvesting as a source of income and food for women, the shellfish fishery has been a focal area for gender-focused fisheries initiatives over the past two decades.

In 2007, the TRY Oyster Women's Association was established in the community of Karmalloh, with the aim to address the "connected challenges of unemployment and coastal degradation".⁴⁸ TRY created a successful network of over 500 oyster harvesters, across fifteen communities, bringing together women and villages who did not interact previously,⁴⁹ and reshaping ethnic and occupational identities and sense of self-worth.²⁰ In addition to environmental and social initiatives, TRY offers training in financial management, food hygiene, and water safety. In 2012, the Tanbi Wetlands National Park was declared a "special management area" with TRY entering into co-management of the area with the Gambian Department of Fisheries, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, the Department of Forestry, and the National Environment Agency in 2013. This arrangement grants TRY members exclusive harvesting rights within the National Park.¹⁷ Association members are encouraged to be caretakers of the mangroves, actively preventing others from cutting them down for firewood and participating in reforestation efforts.¹⁷ Members also implement oyster fisheries management practices such as seasonal closures, shellfish size limits, and gear restrictions to reduce the harvest of juvenile oysters, avoid overharvesting and use of damaging gear.

“TRY created a successful network of over 500 oyster harvesters, across fifteen communities, bringing together women and villages who did not interact previously”

The Gambia-Senegal Sustainable Fisheries Project was a five-year initiative (2009-2014) with a USD3.4 million budget from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the West Africa Regional Mission, and implemented through a number of partners, including the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center, World Wide Fund for Nature West Africa Marine Program Office, the Department of Fisheries, the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources, TRY Oyster Women’s Association, and the National Sole Co-Management Committee. The project focused on sustainable fisheries management, with specific funding to support cross-cutting issues of water, sanitation, and hygiene, climate change, and gender equity. The initiative contributed to capacity strengthening of its partners, provided training to nearly 2,000 people, 69% of whom were women, and led to the USAID West Africa Regional Office of Environment & Climate Change Resilience Results Framework.

Several other projects, such as the West Africa Regional Fisheries Program, Phase II Framework (2018) and the Gambia Community Development Project have supported training in sustainable, handling and processing, as well as the implementation of conservation measures in harvesting areas including regeneration and restoration of mangrove forests.¹⁰ Implementation of project activities focused in particular on decision making processes being inclusive and gender equitable.⁵⁰

A recent public-private sector agreement aims to sustainably develop oyster production in the wild and from aquaculture to meet growing local demand and increase exports in The Gambia over the next decade, with a focus on supporting women oyster producers.⁵¹ The programme also seeks to improve safety and workers’ rights. The agreement is the result of joint efforts between the Gambian oyster value chain and FISH4ACP, a value chain development initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, implemented by FAO with funding from the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.⁵²

“The Gambia-Senegal Sustainable Fisheries Project provided training to nearly 2,000 people, 69% of whom were women”

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Group of workers in front of fish dryers next to the beach of Sanyang. Photo: iStock.com/Salvador-Aznar



Marie Sambou, an oyster harvester, and her catch. Photo: ©Jason Florio - floriophoto.com - all rights reserved

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3. Marine fisheries statistics are derived from catch reconstruction under the Sea Around Us. <http://www.seaaroundus.org/data/#/eez> The approach utilized builds on national statistics and accounts for discards as well as sectoral catch data that often is not included in official datasets (e.g., artisanal or recreational catches). The Sea Around Us data is also utilized here as a consistent frame of reference for and to facilitate comparison across the set of countries for which fact sheets were developed as part of this project. Sea Around Us data are distinguished according to the following categories: large-scale (i.e., industrial) and small-scale (i.e., artisanal, subsistence and recreational) fisheries catches. Recreational catches were not considered here.
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