

Sierra Leone Fisheries Sector



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A Profile of Sierra Leone's Fisheries Sector

This publication has been produced by the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA), an Agency of the Government of Sierra Leone established by the Investment and Export Promotion Act 2007 to carry out a number of functions, including:

- Promoting investment opportunities in Sierra Leone and providing information to potential investors on matters relating to investments;
- Facilitating registration of business enterprises and assisting investors in obtaining permits, licenses, certificates or clearances needed for the commencement of business;
- Assisting potential investors to identify and make decisions on joint venture partners in Sierra Leone; and
- Developing relationships between public and private sector for the growth of investment.

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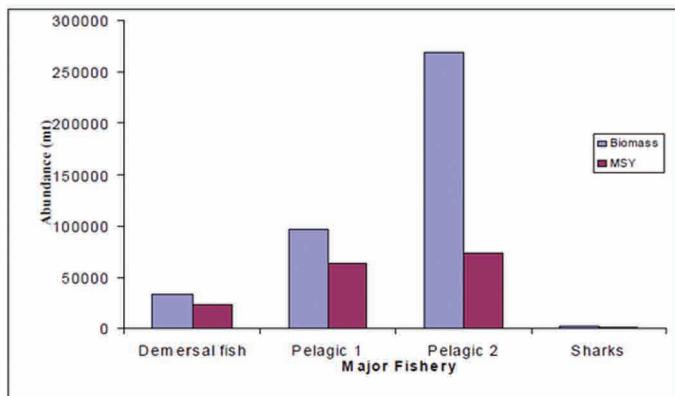
Fisheries Sector

Sector Overview

Sierra Leone is advantageously located on the coast of West Africa with a 570km coastline and a continental shelf area of 30,000 km². The coastline is about 500km long with a 200 nautical miles territorial sea limit and 5 to 6 nautical miles Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) for artisanal fishing. Its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covers about 155,700 km². The climate regime supports two seasons; the rainy season (May – October) and the dry season (November- April). The dominant current systems are the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem and the Canary Current Ecosystem which provide nutrients for the pelagic and demersal fish stock.

This ecosystem supports commercially viable stocks of pelagic and demersal fish. Many of these fish varieties are exported including snapper, grouper, catfish, barracuda, tuna, cuttlefish, squid, lobsters, shrimp, herring and sea bream. The management of these fish resources fall under a co-management system that is divided between artisanal and industrial fishing. The Government of Sierra Leone aims to improve on production levels and create a sustainable management system. Furthermore, Government is soliciting large scale investments in this sector, especially around fish processing, transportation and exportation infrastructure to support the growth.

Figure 1: Available Fish Stock (2011) using Maximum Sustainable Yield Data



Source: Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources

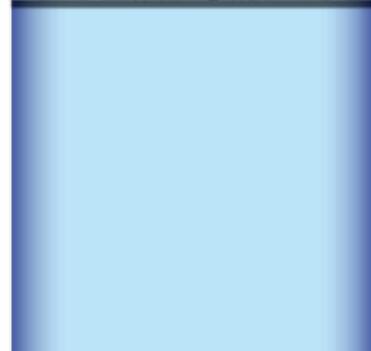
Artisanal Fisheries sub-Sector

This is a significant source of employment in Sierra Leone providing about 160,000 direct jobs. There are between 20,000 – 30,000 artisanal fishermen. Activity is mostly concentrated within 15-45km of the coast line in the Exclusive Economic Zone in the estuaries of the Sierra Leone River and Yawri Bay. Most fishermen use dugout and planked canoes of which only about 10% is motorized as at 2010. There are over 7600 boats in operations using some 641 landing sites with varied levels of available facilities for processing. Artisanal production is about 120,000 MT and over 70% is consumed by the local market. Estimates suggest that catch by artisanal fisherman is about half of the true potential of 6,000-40,000 MT of freshwater fish, 55,000 metric tons of pelagic fish, and 85,000-100,000 MT of demersal. The clupeids (*Ethmalosafimbriata* and *Sardinellamaderensis*) constitute about 60% of the total artisanal fishery production. About 40% of the artisanal fishing gear is surface driftnets targeting juveniles of pelagic species.

Estimated annual export earnings are about US \$1.9 million for finfish, US \$7.4 million for shrimps and US \$ 7.1 million for other shellfish. There is also some export of bonga (dried fish) which is mainly exported to the US market and consumed domestically.

In 2007, total revenue were around US\$9.8Million and grew to US\$ 23.6Million as at June 2012

Year	Sardinella spp	Ethmalosa fimbriata	Total Artisanal fisheries production (all species)
2001	9849	24790	39950
2002	13251	31491	55659
2003	15447	28516	65458
2004	18211	51046	106216
2005	22061	52677	116614
2006	15173	60109	120490
2007	16574	52715	111939



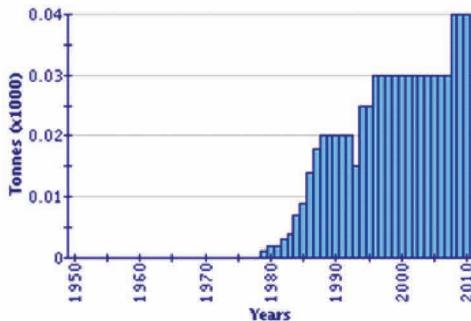
Industrial Fisheries Sub-Sector

The industrial sector comprises of 40-50 vessels that are mainly operated by foreign owners under joint venture agreements. They fish outside of the Inshore Exclusion Zone. Their fleets mainly consist of shrimp and demersal finfish trawlers with GRT between 75–200 and 100–300 Tonnes, respectively. However, with proper management and surveillance systems in place, industrial fishing could generate US \$38 million annually not including profits to be made from value addition and the opening up of markets such as the EU that have not been accessed by Sierra Leone. Investments in industrial fisheries will require heavy capital investment to build the requisite infrastructure and acquire fleet sizes that are competitive with other foreign interests.

Aquaculture: Fish Farming

Aquaculture activities are mostly concentrated in the Southern Districts of Bo, Moyamba and Pujehun; in the Northern Districts of Tonkolili; and in the Eastern Districts of Kailahun, Kenema and Kono totalling 1050 ponds. Aquaculture was introduced in the rural areas in the 1970s to promote sustainable fish production for subsistence in these areas. Tilapia is the main species used in fish farming. Annual production is currently estimated at 20,000 Tons, of which about 5,000 Tons come from lakes and 15,000 Tons from riverine and flood plains. There is room for increasing annual production to about 40,000 Tons. This sector continues to thrive in the inland areas and the Government is putting measures in place to support the sustainable development of this practice through the Smallholder Commercialization Programme and other funded projects.

Aqua Culture Production (1950 – 2010)



Source: (FAO Fishery Statistics, Aquaculture production)

Recent Developments in the Sector

The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to increasing the commercialization of this sector given the available stock. Moreover, GoSL is promoting sustainable development that will allow responsible exploitation and curb illegal fishing. Key Government initiatives towards these objectives include:

- The establishment of fish landing sites in Goderich, Shenge, Bonthe and Tombo. These sites feature drying and cold storage facilities and jetties and are intended to serve as a transhipment hub to move bulk fish product to serve both the domestic and international market;
- Four Marine Protected Areas have been established in Yawri Bay, Sierra Leone River Estuary, Sherbro River Estuary and the Scarcies River Estuary;
- There has been review of the 1994 Fisheries Management and Development Act to create the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act.
- The Vessel Monitoring System was established in 2009 which requires that legal vessels have transponders to communicate activities at sea (including catch and location) to improve monitoring;
- The EU has also funded activities to equip the country with quality control facilities that will allow Sierra Leone to meet EU regulations in order to export to this market.

Key Local Private Sector Players

Sierra Fishing Company: Established in 1976, Sierra Fishing Company is the largest domestically owned fishing company and is exporting to Senegal, Nigeria, Egypt and Lebanon. Current production level is 3,000mt but has the potential to increase once new markets such as the EU open up.

Unique Selling Points

Sustainable and Available Stock of Fish

There is a significant stock of fish based on biomass figures when compared to the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY).

- Small Pelagics stock: 70,000 and 120,000 MT
- Large Pelagics: 15,000 MT
- Dermersel : 7,000MT

According to The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Sierra Leone has an estimated stock valuation of US \$ 750 Million annually, only a fraction of that is being realized currently.

Market Access

- There is a high demand for fish products in the West African market as production is often not high enough to meet their domestic demands. Senegal and Nigeria import over US \$ 600 Million worth of fish each year and Sierra Leone is only exporting a dismal amount to these countries.
- The local demand for fish is worth about US\$18 million based on 2011 and 2012 figures.
- Sierra Leone is also in close proximity to the EU market and serious infrastructure upgrading is underway to ensure that EU regulations are met to allow for exportation.
- There is also a domestic market for fish which is growing by 3% per annum coupled with GDP growth averaging 7%, so also increased incomes can be expected.
- This sector is a main source of export earnings contributing US\$ 2.8million as revenue annually.

- The promotion of fish processing is also a niche market such as dried fish for export to the US market. Currently, Sierra Leone is producing approximately 21,000 kgs of dried bonga for both international and domestic consumption. This is a growing market.
- With the upgraded airport infrastructure there are secure options to transport fish using air freight for shorter delivery times to the market.

Investment Opportunities

Increasing Industrial Fishing

- There is room for more investments in industrial fishing given the available fish stock.

Supporting the Building of Fisheries Infrastructure

- There is a lack of infrastructure to support this growing sector specifically access to cold storage facilities, landing sites, drying facilities and service centers for trawler.
- Government is interested in pursuing favourable partnership opportunities to build fisheries harbors that will support commercialization.

Fish Processing

- This will allow for value addition for fish production through the establishment of: processing rooms, cold storage, vacuum packing, packing and blast freezing to support both air freight and sea transport of these goods.
- Furthermore, fish processing facilities will also tap into the local market to supply supermarkets across the country.

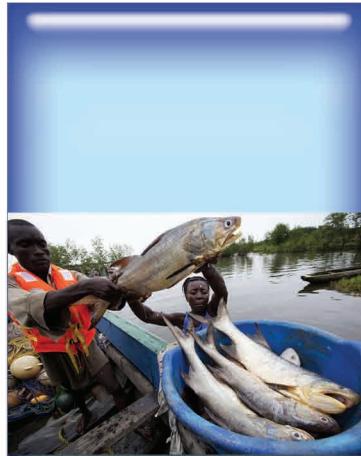
Coastal Fisheries Operations

Boat Building: The sector is dominated by planked canoes and dugouts which are not motorized. There is room for providing fit-for-purpose boats at reasonable costs to support local fishermen. Furthermore, service centers can also be incorporated to serve both artisanal and industrial fishing vessels.

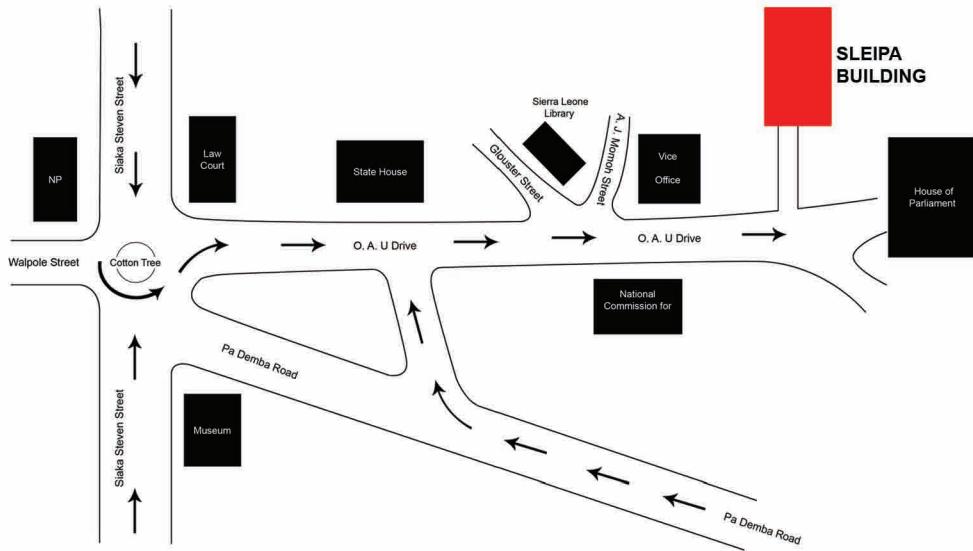
Transportation: There is a huge demand for water transportation for movement of both human and produce cargo within Sierra Leone which is currently not being met. One of the major challenges is creating access to markets which can also be utilized for regional transportation of fish products.

Procedures

All fishing licenses are awarded by the Sierra Leone Maritime Administration (SLMA) and an application should be submitted with all necessary certified documents and fees. Applications are submitted to the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources which is followed by an inspection of the vessel after which an appraisal process is undertaken before the issuance of license when all fees have been paid.



Where to find us in Freetown



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