

Oman small pelagic FIP

Initial information gathering: Preliminary questions for the Ministry

preliminary responses from Taif Altobi 2 July 2025

further information requests in green

Background

The Oman small pelagic FIP was formally initiated in May 2025. The FIP action plan is based on a gap analysis of the fishery, relative to the MarineTrust standard for sustainable fishmeal fisheries. Many of the missing elements in that evaluation, however, were due to the assessor (Jo Gascoigne) not being sufficiently informed about the fisheries management framework in Oman.

We therefore would like to take this opportunity to solicit some additional information from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources about the management of the small pelagic fishery in Oman, as the basis for the ongoing work of the FIP in close partnership with the Ministry.

Questions on the fisheries policy framework

- Is there an overarching fisheries policy or set of objectives underpinning fisheries management? Is it publically available / could it be provided?
Yes, there is an overarching policy and set of objectives that guide fisheries management, and the ministry plays a key role in regulating fisheries sector. Ensuring sustainability and responsible use of Marine resource.
 1. The living aquatic resources law. (Shared with you)
 2. Ministerial Decision on the regulation of meal and fish oil factories.
- Is there a formal (or informal) commitment to principles such as sustainability, the precautionary approach and ecosystem-based management in Oman fisheries management policy?

The Ministry is committed to these principles. Jo to review the above documentation.

- What is the legal basis for fisheries management in Oman (e.g. a fisheries law and associated regulations, or similar)? Is it publically available / could it be provided?
- What are the regulations which apply specifically to the small-pelagic fishery and how were they defined? Are they publically available / could they be provided?

Legal basis for fisheries management in Oman is primarily established through the living aquatic resources law and its associated regulation.

*Framework:

- Regulating fishing activities
- Protecting aquatic resources
- Licensing , sustainable use of fisheries
- Is there are process for periodic review of management? (for the small-pelagic fishery specifically and/or more generally)

Regulation for small pelagic fishery.

- Regulated under living aquatic resources law

Questions on interactions of the Ministry with fishers and fishing communities

- What is the mechanism by which the Ministry communicates with fishers to provide information?

Social media, fishermen's associations, formal meetings (location of fisherman association in each government)

- Does the Ministry or any other organisation provide any kind of training to fishers? If so, what kind, how and how regularly?

Apparently, the Ministry is working with company on this (Under the program called Advanced fishing boat)

- Does the Ministry have a process for consultation with stakeholders on policy? If so, how is this done?

Yes, Through workshops and meetings, Labs (Closed discussion)

- Is the basis for decisions taken by the Ministry documented and explained to stakeholders? If so, how?

Social media, fishermen's associations, formal meetings

- Is there a mechanism for the resolution of disputes in the fishery?

Firstly internal process through fishermen's associations, with the option of appealing directly to the Permanent Secretary or Minister if that does not work

- Is there a significant community of small-scale and subsistence fishers? If so, is there a mechanism to ensure that they have some access to the resource?

Small-scale fishers have a simpler and lower cost process for licensing and vessel registration

Questions on scientific advice and its role in decision-making

- Does the Ministry conduct scientific research, or solicit or obtain scientific information or advice from other organisations, relevant to the management of the small-pelagic fishery? If so, is this on a regular basis (e.g. annual) or periodic / opportunistic? Who is the information/advice from? Is it publically available or could some recent examples be provided?
- What role does science play in management decisions? e.g. in the establishment or revision of regulations to manage the fishery?

The Ministry is responsible for stock assessments, which are used together with economic information to support decision making. Stock assessments should be conducted every 2 years under a new project – but it is not clear how frequent they have been up till now. The ministry can't share any report belongs to stock assessment .

Questions on monitoring, control and enforcement

These questions have not been answered in detail as yet, but in general, monitoring and enforcement are the responsibility of i) MAFWR, ii) the Royal Oman Coast Guard, and iii) the Environment Agency (e.g. in respect of ETP species). Fisheries data are collected by enumerators in each governorate (mainly on paper although electronic is planned). Fisheries statistics should be publically available on the Ministry website but information about controls and compliance is not public.

- Who has responsibility for fisheries enforcement and compliance? What are the different types of controls used? (e.g. quayside monitoring, factory monitoring, observers, satellite monitoring, patrol vessels, aircraft ...)
- What are the requirements on fishers for control of their activities? (e.g. vessel registration, licences and permits, quota allocations, completion of logbooks or landing reports, VMS ...)
- Is there a vessel list for the fishery? If so, is it published / available?
- Are there designated landing sites for the fishery? If so, could you provide a list?
- Are fishers required to provide data to the Ministry on their catch? By what means / in what format? Are (blank) examples of data forms available / could they be provided?
- Is information on the number of controls and non-compliances published or made available to stakeholders in any format?
- Does the Ministry have access to data on landings and effort from the small pelagic fishery (quantity of landings by species, number of vessels, number of trips or days at sea etc.)? If so, what is the main source(s) of this information, and how robust and reliable do you consider it to be?
- Is any information available on the interaction of the fishery with protected species (e.g. turtles, cetaceans)? Are fishers required to report such interactions and are there any rules around how such animals should be handled and treated?