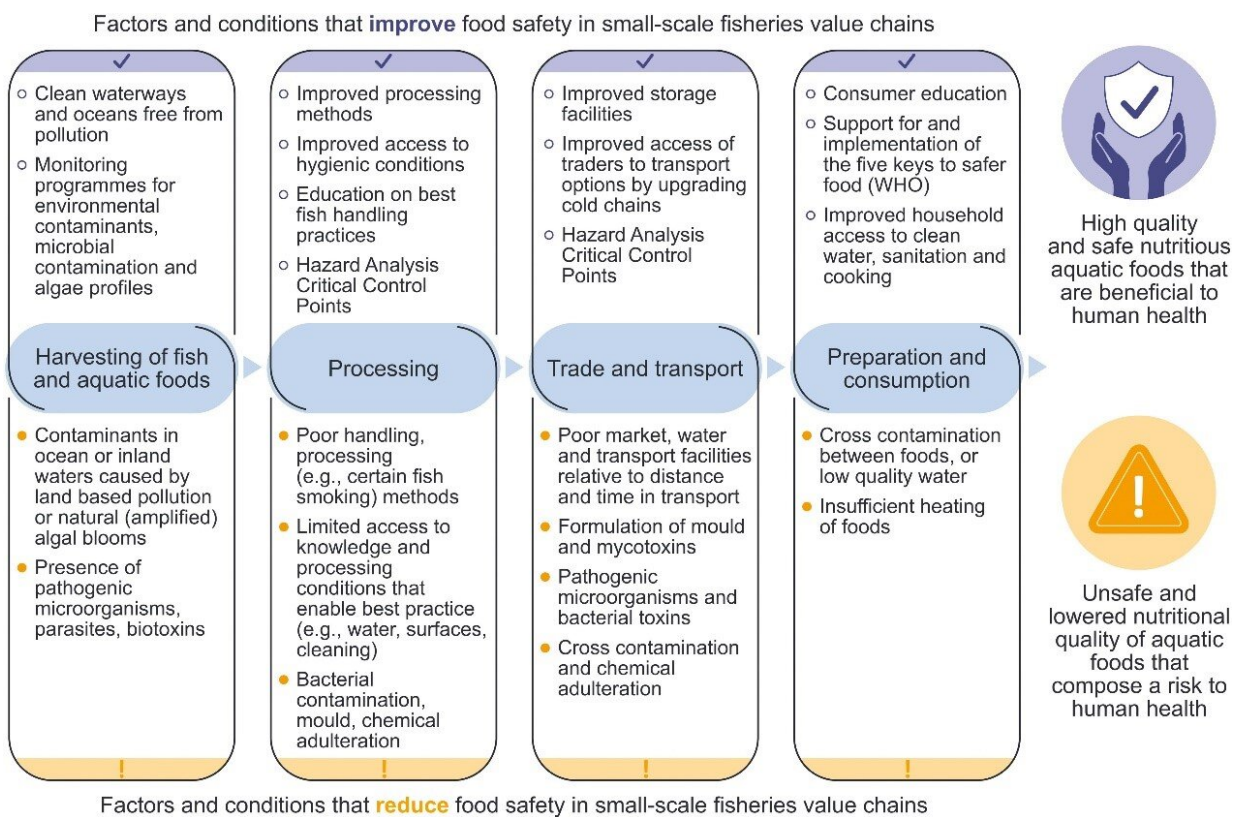


Ensuring food safety and quality in small-scale fisheries: New insights and recommendations

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Factors and conditions that influence the food safety in small-scale fisheries following the value chains from harvesting (box 1), processing (box 2), trade and transport (box 3) to preparation and consumption (box 4). Bullet points above the value chain steps are factors that improve food safety, whereas bullet points below the value chain steps are factors that reduce food safety. Credit: *Food Quality and Safety* (2023). DOI: 10.1093/fqsafe/fyad007

In a study published in the journal *Food Quality and Safety* in January 2023, researchers from Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations leveraging surveys from 2017, 2019, and 2022, scrutinized the enforcement of Article 11 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

The revelations from the study underscore the urgency of addressing the substantial challenges encountered by SSFs, including insufficient sanitation, a dearth of monitoring programs, and inadequate infrastructure, particularly refrigeration facilities. The study also highlighted the need for a more balanced application of safety and [quality assurance](#) measures, which are predominantly directed towards [international markets](#) while frequently overlooking domestic markets, which are often more informal in nature.

The research incorporated survey responses from 143 FAO Members, including the European Union, and also considered 87 open-ended replies. This extensive data set elucidated the diverse and dynamic nature of SSFs, as well as the crucial role they fulfill within the global food system. The study found that more than 60% of countries have implemented national policies on safety and quality assurance for fisheries and aquaculture.

However, enforcement of these measures is uneven and often presents considerable challenges, especially in regions such as Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The findings emphasized the urgent need to address these issues, given the critical role of SSFs in contributing to global fish catches, especially in non-high-income countries.

The FAO study concluded with a robust set of recommendations for future actions, underscored by the need for strategic investments in education, infrastructure, and food control tools. Such investments can significantly enhance the application of the Code of Conduct for

Responsible Fisheries, thus facilitating the production of safer, nutritionally enriched food. By doing so, shelf-life can be extended and post-harvest losses reduced. This could contribute immensely towards the achievement of several UN Sustainable Development Goals.

This research underscores the imperative for governments, industry stakeholders, and [regulatory bodies](#) to prioritize investments in SSFs, ensuring the safety and quality of their products. Such measures would not only benefit [public health](#) but would also pave the way for the long-term sustainability of the SSF sector, which plays such a pivotal role in global food security.

More information: Esther GarridoGamarro et al, Challenges in the implementation of food safety and quality assurance systems in small-scale fisheries, *Food Quality and Safety* (2023). [DOI: 10.1093/fqsafe/fyad007](#)

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