

# The Role of the Blue Economy: Fishing Industry in Mauritania's Economy

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## Abstract

Mauritania's economy relies heavily on the fishing industry, which fulfills all the necessary conditions to ensure its prosperity. As the largest private employer in the country, the fishing sector is responsible for around 40 percent of Mauritania's exports and contributes to a staggering 90 percent of the country's generated public revenue. This article seeks to shed light on the importance of the fishing industry, not only on the national scale but also in the broader context of regional and international trade, in what Mauritania terms "the blue Economy". This research project uses a qualitative methodology, relying predominantly on a thorough content analysis of critical literature, comprehensive industry reports, and relevant policy documents. The project seeks to furnish valuable insights about what awaits the fishing industry in the new economy, as well as how it might respond to this myriad of opportunities and challenges. The project's overall finding is that, despite numerous structural conditions that make it difficult for the fishing industry to operate as a typical sector of the economy, it functions as a vital engine of growth—exhibiting a tremendous amount of potential for even more robust contributions to the sustainable development goals.

**Keywords:** Fishing Industry, Economic Development, Public Revenue, International Competition

**Introduction**

Rich in natural resources, Mauritania is a country poised on the northwestern coast of Africa that holds ample opportunity for economic growth and prosperity. Yet it is along the Atlantic Ocean—a biologically and ecologically diverse powerhouse of a marine ecosystem—that Mauritania has its greatest economic potential. It is here that Mauritania's fishing industry can be found. And this industry, which has seen significant transformation and evolution in recent years, is now one of the country's most vital sectors, contributing in significant ways—not only to the life of communities along only to the life of communities along the coast but to the national economy as a whole. In 2020 alone, the fishing sector contributed over 22% to the national Gross Domestic Product. The fishing industry in Mauritania plays a transformative and vital role in shaping the country's intricate financial landscape (Ghalla & Moussa, 2021). It directly employs over 60,000 people, with a direct payroll figure estimated at a bit more than \$9 million annually.

The fishing sector indirectly supports many additional jobs through an extensive supply chain that spans several interconnected sectors, notably processing. Mauritania's industry presence is powerful. The country is seen as an emerging top player in the sub-regional influence game, a statesman able to engage its far-flung neighborhood (and the more immediate ones across the Mediterranean) to its north and south, through a series of "fishing for influence" agreements that have been struck mostly with European countries. These pay-for-access agreements with Mauritania involve a mix of cash, fish, and equipment for local fishing communities and allow foreign fleets to fish with abandon in Mauritanian waters (The Economist, 2010).

Even though Mauritania's fishing industry is crucial to the country's economy, its growth and sustainability are under serious threat from a number of different directions—most importantly, from the industry's own practices. Rampant overfishing, both by local fishermen and by international fishing expeditions that come to Mauritania's waters, has left many of Mauritania's fish species perilously close to extinction. Most experts agree that the country is in a fishing crisis. Despite this, Mauritania's poorly funded ministry of fisheries is unable to keep a plan for managing fish stocks on the agenda for too long. Intensive international fishing companies continue to plunder the country's most lucrative species (like the Mauritanian octopus, which sells for \$15/kg in European markets) by ignoring regulations and fishing at unsustainable rates. And in coastal communities like the fishing town of Nouadhibou, the locals not only lack the means to pay the police officers who are supposed to enforce those regulations, but they also fear that fishing is all they have to look forward to. (Sidi & Kassim, 2023).

The Ministry of Fisheries (2023) has stated that the all-encompassing reforms that are so urgently needed can hardly be reduced to a mere handful. What is perhaps most important is the vision that has taken shape under the current minister. It emphasizes not only the immediate ecologically responsible use of fishery resources but also the long-term development of sustainable fishing communities. Nevertheless, despite all the good intentions and high hopes, a number of observers believe that enforcement will be the ministry's main shortcoming. Mauritania's waters are already being ravaged by illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing that plunders marine resources. And that IUU fishing,

plus the cover of darkness enjoyed by foreign vessels, is not only causing an ecological disaster but is also hampering potential long-term prospects for fishery enforcement (FAO, 2022).

The fishing industry in Mauritania has an untapped economic potential, but it has suffered from a very much constrained capital-development situation. The sector is grossly undercapitalized, and the investment that has been made has not, in many cases, resulted in effective or modern facilities. The situation has a very direct impact on not just the opportunities for the local population to work in the seafood sector but also on the kinds of profitability opportunities that the sector ought to present to the Mauritania economy as a whole. When one looks at the fishing industry in Mauritania, then, one is struck by the almost total absence of any modern value-added processes in the sector and of any kind of contemporary equipment or facilities capable of undertaking those processes. The appearances that accompany this direct situation of underinvestment have a very detrimental impact on the sector's economic potential, in both literal and figurative senses (Dahi & Enweruzo, 2024).

As a result, an unfortunate number of jobs that should have been created in the local economy have, instead, been sent to other countries. These countries have more sophisticated processing capabilities and better infrastructure, as the World Bank pointed out in its 2023 report. These structural weaknesses, combined with a range of strong environmental challenges, put the fishing industry at a kind of crossroads that makes it really easy to see its potential future direction. For one thing, climate change is surely in the process of fundamentally altering marine ecosystems. Rising ocean temperatures and increased pollution are already doing their worst by supercharging several familiar processes—degradation of coastal habitats (like wetlands and the reefs that provide our coastal communities with a kind of armor against the destructive forces of the ocean), rising sea levels, and intensifying storms. Mauritania's fishing industry is currently beset by numerous problems of a complex and multidimensional nature. Foremost among these is the threat to the sector's viability posed by a rapidly growing number of fishing licenses (Bay, 2023).

Over the past 15 years, upward of 50 private and public foreign parties have been granted licenses to fish in Mauritanian waters. Of these, close to 20 licensees have been active in 2009 through 2011. The sector is under considerable strain from these and other allied problems—including ineffective regulation, inadequate investment, and overcapacity—inherent in the fishing industry and in the national context. After our study trip, we better understand these dynamics and the serious threat they pose to Mauritania's fishing future.

The rapid decline of fish populations is a major cause for concern. Fishing practices that are not sustainable pose a direct threat to the ecosystem of the sea, and they also create an industry that is not economically viable in the long term. The fishing community in Mauritania has a serious problem that it needs to address with extreme urgency. This community is heavily dependent on a series of fishing ports, and they suffer on a daily basis because the Port of Nouakchott has environmental problems that are preventing Mauritians from reaping the full benefits of fishing. The problems at the Port of Nouakchott and the fishing community's over-dependence on it are serious and, as yet, not completely understood (Rolli, Rivoira, Halilaj, & Ghribi, 2024).

The fishing sector faces a series of urgent environmental threats compounded by a nearly total absence of regulatory enforcement. This makes the sector an easy target for foreign fleets, which strip the waters of fish with little regard for the long-term effects on an industry that is both a critical source of protein and a principal driver of foreign revenue. Yet the Mauritanian government seems only partially able to effect the reforms so clearly needed in this sector. The fishing industry remains strategically important to the local population. There is no reason why Mauritians shouldn't enjoy the long-term benefits that come from a well-managed fishing enterprise. These changes need to cover not just the relentless overfishing of marine resources but also the problems at the core of the fishing industry that now keep it from realizing its potential and functioning effectively. If the industry does not start operating as a genuine asset for the country, Mauritania could risk having it serving as a liability instead (Khalil, 2024).

The article has two main goals: The first one is to exhaustively evaluate the present input of the fishery sector to Mauritania's economy, with a standard neoclassical project (much worth considering, thanks to the presence of former World Bank and IMF staff in the project team) in terms of GDP, employment, and foreign relations. The second goal is to identify and talk about the real problems the sector faces today—overfishing, mostly by foreign fleets; weak and not very convincing regulations; and insufficient investment, leading to minimal processing capability and value in the fishery product.

The article will next assess the kinds of environmental hazards that threats like climate change, pollution, and coastal erosion can pose to the very marine ecosystems vital to the fishing industry's survival. Finally, it will scrutinize the part that international partnerships and agreements play in, oh so crucially, shaping the management strategies and sustainability practices of the fishing industry in Mauritania and, by extension, in the global context.

### **Motivation and Contribution**

This study is motivated by the urgent need to address the complex challenges facing Mauritania's fishing industry, a sector vital to the nation's economy and coastal communities yet threatened by overfishing, inadequate regulation, and environmental degradation. By providing a comprehensive analysis of the industry's economic role, structural weaknesses, and sustainability challenges, this research contributes valuable insights that bridge local realities with broader regional and international dynamics. It offers a nuanced understanding of how Mauritania can harness its blue economy potential responsibly, guiding policymakers and stakeholders toward strategies that promote long-term ecological balance and economic resilience. Literature Review

### **Literature Review**

#### *Fishing Industry in Mauritania: Historical Overview*

Mauritania has traditionally relied on the fishing sector as a key economic driver, one that nourishes many dimensions of its national economy and sustains the lives of its people. Since the early 2000s, this industry has seen persistent and strong growth—they call it “steady” in some quarters—and it now accounts for almost 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). With deep waters that bristle with good-power line fish, and shallow waters with hauls of bottom fish, Mauritania's fishermen should be smiling. Yet all appears not to be well. Mauritania's people are not realizing the full benefits from an industry that seems

increasingly to be dominated by foreign interests, and we—the fishing people of Mauritania—are not making the most of the largely sustainable resource of fish, something that threatens not just our industry but also the well-being of our nation and our people (Bay, 2023).

Mauritania's fishing industry has deep historical roots. It traces a lineage back over centuries to the traditional practice of artisanal fishing, which forms the backbone of long-established coastal communities, whose culture and economy have been intimately tied to this sector. Coastal populations, particularly in the key urban centers of Nouadhibou and Nouakchott, have subsisted primarily on artisanal fishing, as the FAO (2022) has documented, making a decent living despite the sector being quite rudimentary. Yet, since the late 20th century, profound changes have occurred within Mauritania's fishing sector. These have included a significant staff turnover in whom the operations employ, with a large number of young people; a switch from fishing big boats to fishing small boats; a shift from primordial working methods to more advanced working methods; and a shift from the internal market to export markets (Ghalla & Moussa, 2021).

International treaties have certainly played a major role in bringing valuable revenue to the Mauritanian economy. But in tandem with this financial influx, there has been a serious problem: the rampant and alarming overexploitation of marine resources. The foreign vessels that come to Mauritanian waters (mostly European) have fished plentifully, but not sustainably, in so doing threatening the long-term viability of Mauritania's fish stocks (Ministry of Fisheries, 2023). The aforementioned EU-Mauritania agreement on fisheries access is illustrative of this dynamic. By allowing European vessels access to its continental shelf, Mauritania is paid a substantial amount of money every year, but working out the amount of that submarine resource rent led to tensions and unpleasant consequences that bring up perceptive questions about development economics, marine law, and the sustainability of certain fishing (Moulaye & Moulaye, 2024).

#### *Economic Contributions: Employment, Revenue, and Trade*

Mauritania's fishing industry constitutes one of the principal sources of employment in the nation, especially in coastal areas where the population has ready access to the ocean. A vast array of activities encompasses this industry, mainly involving the direct capture of marine resources and the processing of those resources into exportable products. According to the comprehensive report recently issued by the Mauritanian Ministry of Fisheries, approximately 30,000 people within the nation hold direct jobs in this industry, with that number likely to increase as the industry grows and adds the range of more than 36 products to its arsenal of activities (Ministry of Fisheries, 2023). If we consider the comprehensive array of indirect jobs associated with the fishing industry, we can conclude that scores of thousands more hold positions in "services" directly or indirectly associated with the fishing industry.

Aside from the previously mentioned employment dynamics, artisanal fishing continues to be a source of livelihood for many communities, with a particular focus on the city of Nouadhibou. Here, a large portion of the population seems to be heavily reliant on various fishing-related activities for their economic survival (IMROP, 2023). However, this sector, which provides a hefty number of jobs, is marked by many workers who find themselves in precarious positions: earning low wages and, for all intents and purposes, lacking a sufficient set of social protections to ensure their rights and well-being (FAO, 2022). Finally, but very

importantly, the fishing sector faces another serious challenge that has to do with a failure to integrate women into its workforce. There are many reasons for this failure, but the most prominent one has to do with fishing as a male-dominated setting that, because of entrenched cultural norms and societal expectations, restricts women's access to certain economic activities (Marie, 2015).

Mauritania's fishing industry serves as a linchpin for employment opportunities in the nation, particularly in its coastal areas, such as Nouadhibou. The rich marine resources directly underpin the livelihoods of countless individuals and families in those regions. The Mauritanian Ministry of Fisheries reports that fishing activities directly furnish more than 30,000 jobs—a figure that rises dramatically when one accounts for the multitude of fish processing, exportation, and other related activities that constitute interconnected industries along what one might call the "fishing value chain." Not only does the fishing sector provide a copious number of direct and indirect jobs, but it also serves as a major revenue source for the Mauritanian government, again in large part because of the activities that take place along the fishing value chain and the various agreements and arrangements that get made along those activities. One such significant source of revenue involves the fishing agreement that the European Union has with Mauritania (Gheeraert & Weill, 2015).

#### *Islamic Finance and the Fishing Industry*

The context of Mauritania has widened the opportunities for improving the conditions of small-scale fishermen. This group faces numerous financial challenges that make it almost impossible for them to realize any substantial growth in their fishing activities. Yet, the introduction of institutions that operate according to the principles of Islamic finance, such as the Islamic Bank of Mauritania, offers new and promising avenues for fishermen to access capital. The Islamic Bank of Mauritania has developed a portfolio of unique financial instruments that are compliant with Sharia law, which means these products are permissible under the tenets of Islam. These "fishing-friendly" financial instruments represent a significant departure from the modus operandi of conventional banks, which typically serve fishing communities in a way that is at odds with their (the community's) financial reality (Eyih & Bouchetara, 2021).

Conducting a series of interviews with financial experts connected to the Islamic Bank of Mauritania led to the realization that Islamic finance has helped relieve some of the small-scale fishermen's economic pressures—namely, by establishing partnerships that allow for asset-backed financing. Using such instruments, small-scale fishermen can purchase the basic equipment they need to carry out their trade (Sidi & Kassim, 2023). Yet, one must also recognize that a number of significant obstacles still stand in the way of ensuring that the financial products offered by the bank are not only understandable but also reachable to all fishermen—especially those who live in the geographically remote and isolated conditions that often characterize small-scale fishing and who consequently may have little to no contact with or understanding of the formal banking system and its workings.

Incorporating Islamic finance into the fishing sector offers a viable means of overcoming the persistent financial constraints that small-scale fishermen face. Research shows that products offered by institutions like the Islamic Bank of Mauritania have greatly improved community access to fishing-related credit, which in turn has strengthened their overall economic

resilience (BIM Report, 2023). What makes this development particularly compelling is the recognition that the financial services themselves are doing much more than just filling a gap; they are also enabling the communities served by them to undertake a complete transformation in both the structure and efficacy of their fishing sector.

### *Challenges Facing the Sector*

In spite of the economic significance of the fishing industry in Mauritania, it is confronted with a multitude of challenges that can be categorized as both structural and operational in nature. Among the most pressing issues currently facing this vital sector is the phenomenon of overfishing, which poses a considerable threat to the long-term sustainability and viability of fishing resources (FAO, 2022). According to reports from the Mauritanian Institute for Oceanographic and Fisheries Research (IMROP), it has been observed that a substantial number of fish stocks are on the verge of depletion, a situation that can be largely attributed to the over-exploitation of resources by foreign fishing fleets coupled with a conspicuous absence of effective regulatory enforcement mechanisms (IMROP, 2023).

The pervasive issue of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing represents another critical challenge, as foreign vessels frequently intrude into Mauritanian waters without proper authorization, resulting in considerable financial losses for the local fishing economy (IMF, 2021). The Mauritanian government has initiated various measures aimed at combating the scourge of IUU fishing by enhancing surveillance and enforcement frameworks; however, these efforts have faced significant obstacles stemming from a chronic lack of resources and operational capacity within the relevant authorities (Ministry of Fisheries, 2023).

In addition to the environmental challenges that threaten the fishing industry, there exists a pressing concern regarding the inadequacy of infrastructure that supports the sector's operations. Many fish processing plants, transportation networks, and storage facilities are frequently found to be outdated and inefficient, thereby severely limiting the industry's capacity to fully leverage its export potential and maximize profitability (IMF, 2021). The acute deficiency of cold storage facilities, in particular, has resulted in substantial post-harvest losses, which subsequently exacerbate the challenges faced by fishermen and further diminish the overall profitability of the industry.

Despite its significant potential for economic growth and development, the fishing industry in Mauritania is beset by a variety of formidable challenges that hinder its progress. A comprehensive study conducted by the Mauritanian Institute for Oceanographic and Fisheries Research (IMROP) has identified overfishing, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory deficiencies as the primary obstacles that are currently constraining the growth and evolution of the sector (IMROP, 2023). Furthermore, issues such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices have critically undermined the sustainability of fish stocks, thereby posing long-term risks to the viability and stability of the fishing industry as a whole.

### **Research Methodology**

This scholarly study follows a qualitative research methods, which is based primarily on the critical appraisal of relevant documents. The reason for selecting this particular methodological approach is to enable a detailed and in-depth investigation of the fishing

industry's many-sided and complex contributions to the economic development of Mauritania. At the same time, it also provides an opportunity to examine what sorts of structural problems the fishing industry has and might have in the future, as well as any significant potential opportunities that the industry's present structure might offer. Following that extensive and varied review, the next phase of the evaluation involved a critical analysis of the researcher's individual appraisal of those documents (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The systematic and structured examination and interpretation of relevant documents are what make up the process of document analysis. This means the industry and I have a mutual understanding—we grasp the workings of the other. I said at the outset that the fishing industry in Mauritania is economically fragile. I also said that it relies on financial resources from outside itself. Those statements come with reasons. Key documents that attest to the structure and operational logic of the fishing economy have come to light thanks to key informants. The big three that shed an incandescent light on the fishing economy are the International Monetary Fund, the Ministry of Fisheries in Mauritania, and the Islamic Bank of Mauritania (Diop, Niang, & Seck, 2018). This specific investigation uses qualitative methods, and in particular document analysis, to shed light on the fishing industry's contributions to Mauritania's economic development. We chose these tools because of their inherent flexibility and the way they allowed us to probe the various complexities and nuances of this industry—things about it we might not have comprehended fully or understood the significance of if we'd been limited to using numbers alone.

#### *Document Analysis*

A systematic and exhaustive examination was performed on a diverse selection of pertinent documents to produce this report. These documents included relevant literature, industry reports, government policies, and press statements associated with the study topic. The choice of this methodological approach is not arbitrary. We selected it for the specific strengths it possesses that are conducive to achieving our study objectives. We want to explore the economic contributions of the fishing sector and its myriad challenges and opportunities. The benefits of employing the document analysis method in reaching our goal of generating empirical knowledge can be summarized succinctly. The information used in this analysis comes from reliable sources such as the Ministry of Fisheries, the Islamic Bank of Mauritania, the International Monetary Fund, and the Mauritanian Institute for Oceanographic and Fisheries Research (IMROP). The documents and reports produced by these institutions provide an excellent foundation for understanding the fishing sector in Mauritania, as they cover many key areas, including "employment and income," "environmental and social challenges," and even "strategic vision."

### **Results and Discussion**

#### *Job Creation and Economic Empowerment*

The fishing industry is one of the most potent sectors when it comes to creating jobs in Mauritania. More than 30,000 direct jobs have been created in the sector, with many more stemming from the related processing and export parts of the industry, as the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy assured us in 2023. Yet despite these numbers, there's a serious downside to some "fishing" as an economic model: the work is often really hard, and sometimes dangerous. I've interviewed a few fishermen from the Nouadhibou area, and their conditions (in several respects) aren't much better than their fathers' and grandfathers'

before them. One major issue is the lack of access to capital: fishermen have a hell of a time securing it in order to buy new and necessary equipment.

Islamic finance has brought some respite to the long-standing challenges faced by fishing communities. Yet, many fishermen still seem to inhabit a world of financial ignorance. Consequently, a large number of these individuals remain oblivious to the wide array of financial products that could be theirs for the taking. This situation points to a conspicuous need for financial literacy programs. Such initiatives could help not only the fishing community's leadership but also its rank-and-file members understand the potential payoff that items in the Islamic finance toolbox could bring to their lives and livelihoods.

The fishing industry constitutes one of the biggest employment sectors in Mauritania. As such, it has a strong influence on both direct and indirect job opportunities within the country. The industry not only creates essential employment but also serves as a significant source of direct and indirect income for the coastal communities that depend on fishing for their economic survival. Mauritania's coastal communities are heavily reliant on fishing. Most of the individuals involved in fishing activities throughout Mauritania are engaged in small-scale operations. This sector's small-scale nature makes it a particularly important source of income for local communities that sit along the economic margins (Sidi & Kassim, 2023). Yet, this sector's employment potential is stymied because too many small-scale fisheries face an array of serious problems. The most pressing of these is undoubtedly the small-scale fishermen's almost total lack of access to the money needed to buy the substantive, modern, and efficient fishing resources that they absolutely must have if they are to operate successfully and sustainably in today's rather tough fishing milieu. Fishing equipment—everything from boats to nets—has to be seen as a nontrivial part of the fishing infrastructure. Unfortunately, this part of the infrastructure is woefully underdeveloped, and half measures like the recent introduction of Islamic financial services have done far too little, far too late. The reason these fishermen can't get money is a complex problem that has to be unbundled.

#### *Public Revenue and Trade Contributions*

Mauritania's public revenue heavily relies on the fishing industry, especially when it comes to international agreements that bring in foreign partners. Of these agreements, the EU-Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement has long been a key element in providing the Mauritanian government with a steady flow of cash. Year after year, it has poured in over half a hundred million euros annually, sometimes much more than that, into Mauritania's coffers (Moulaye & Moulaye, 2024). That money serves the Mauritanian people in two key respects. First and foremost, it finances public services. Second, especially pertinent to the fishing industry, it funds the basic infrastructure that Mauritians need in the coastal communities that are directly impacted by this industry.

The fishing industry is a vital contributor to Mauritania's foreign trade balance. According to the Ministry of Fisheries, fish and seafood made up about 50 percent of Mauritania's total exports in 2022 (Ministry of Fisheries, 2023). The level of export activity underscores the strategic importance of the sector not only for Mauritania's coastal economy but for the country's entire economic landscape. Exports of fish and seafood earn foreign exchange that is crucial to economic stability.

Moreover, it is crucial to mention that Mauritania's fishing industry is a major driver of public revenue. The fisheries agreements it has signed, particularly with the European Union, bring in substantial and dependable income for the government and improve the country's overall fiscal situation. In addition, seafood exports are a major engine of Mauritania's foreign trade. Fisheries data show that 50% of the country's total exports in 2022 were fishery products (Ministry of Fisheries, 2023). Given that figure, and given the respectable prices fetch by fish and seafood in foreign markets, the fishing sector demonstrates its strategic importance not only in generating public revenue but also in securing a sound overall balance of payments for Mauritania.

Even with these positive developments, the fishing sector has yet to reach its full trade potential. This largely stems from inadequate investment in key underpinning structures, narrowed access to vital international markets, and long-standing threats to fishing sustainability—most notably, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing—whose combined impacts potentially could yield an inordinate amount of revenue for fishing communities.

#### *Sustainability and Resource Management*

Mauritania's fishing industry faces perhaps its most daunting challenge: the urgent necessity of sustaining its marine resources, which are under threat from several sources. Chief among these is overfishing—especially illegal fishing—that is pushing many fisheries to or beyond their limits. Even the long-standing artisanal sector is facing some tough realities, like finding fewer fish in parts of its traditional territory and having to work much harder (and sometimes at sea for much longer periods) for catches that used to be considered routine. As a result, many Mauritians now see these international fishing activities (along with other foreign incursions into Mauritania's natural resources) as a direct threat to their livelihoods.

Despite good intentions and measures aimed at reforming the fishing industry, the results have been decidedly lackluster. The principal reason for this poor showing, as best can be determined, is a severe shortfall in the human and physical resources necessary for the basic assignment of enforcement. The conduct of a few in-depth interviews with experts connected to the IMROP has provided some insight into this rather unfortunate situation. These experts pointed out that fishing operates as a largely unregulated activity within an almost impossibly large and open maritime space of around 600,000 square kilometers (Gheeraert & Weill, 2015). Overfishing and environmental degradation threaten Mauritania's national fishing industry and, by extension, its economy. The absence of sustainable fishing practices creates a real danger of resource depletion. To counter these threats, the Mauritanian government is taking several steps. Most importantly, it is beginning to impose fishing quotas. It is also fostering collaborations with international organizations that have both the will and the expertise to help Mauritania manage its fisheries sustainably and successfully. While those steps are important and quite welcome, they are not the whole story. And that is why this case study has been written. At the most basic level, it tells you about fishing in Mauritania. It also goes a bit deeper to tell you about the plans for making the fishery a more sustainable place where both the people of Mauritania and the fish that live there can thrive.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Mauritania's fishing industry plays a central role in the country's economic growth and offers many services that are vital to its productivity. Employment opportunities abound in this sector. In 2010, for instance, the artisanal fishing subsector accounted for 78% of direct fishing-related jobs. Artisanal fishers are employed mostly along the Cap Blanc area, which is the northern end of the country's long coastline along the Atlantic Ocean. Generating income also is something that Mauritania's fishing industry can attend to quite well. The country has the capacity to produce fish at a level that allows for much of it to be exported (Gunenthiram et al., 2018).

### **To effectively tackle these pressing challenges, it is recommended that the Mauritanian government place a high priority on the following strategic recommendations:**

To fight against illegal fishing and to ensure that fishing quotas—critical to sustainable resource management—are respected, we must make enforcement mechanisms work better. So far, our government has limited access to Islamic finance, which is underutilized in this part of the country. Expanding that access could help empower small-scale fishermen. We must also invest in the kind of modern infrastructure that can substantially cut back on post-harvest losses and greatly increase export capacity—when done in concert with the sort of fishing laws and agreements that we are now attempting to enforce (Moulaye & Moulaye, 2024).

It is vitally important to ensure that sustainable fishing is practiced throughout the fishing industry, and this is best done by forming local and international partnerships and working with the fishing communities themselves, to promote a "culture of sustainability." In a country like Mauritania, which has enormous potential for the fishing industry, this culture can be allowed to flourish only if appropriate policies are implemented and the necessary investments—targeted in this case—are made. Otherwise, the fishing industry and the coastal communities that depend on it risk a precarious future.

Mauritania's fishing industry is a cornerstone of economic growth and development. It is a vital source of jobs, public revenue, and trade for the country. But for all these good things it does, the sector is hamstrung by poor management, a lack of money, and overfishing. If these unlovely conditions persist, they could crimp the sector's long-term capacity to develop profitably. The incorporation of Islamic finance into the sector promises to boost some of the small-scale fishing communities' financial barriers. These difficulties often lead to a lack of operational capacity and a precarious financial situation for them.

### **Recommendations for Future Growth within the Fishing Industry Include**

Improving access to Islamic finance for the local fishing community in Mauritania is a key initiative of the project. This ensures that fishermen can access capital to improve their livelihoods and the efficiency of their operations.

Fortifying the regulatory framework of the local fishing industry is also crucial. This guarantees the sustainable management of fish stocks so that both the local fishing community and the marine ecosystem remain healthy in the long term. The project also focuses on local training initiatives. Investing in fishing community capacity programs ensures that Mauritania's local fishermen are better equipped to handle the modern fishing industry. Finally, there is a focus

on improving the local fishing industry's infrastructure—particularly the part that directly interfaces with the local community.

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