



**PORTS  
TASK FORCE**  
to stop illegal fishing  
**GHANA**



# PORTS TASK FORCE GHANA





# ILLEGAL FISHING: WHAT IS HAPPENING AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Annual global economic losses to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are thought to be as high as \$23.5 billion. Illegal operators are driven by money, and key hotspots for their operations include West Africa's tuna and pelagic fisheries.



**Illegal fishing is generally deliberate, organised and systematic. Illegal fishing takes place alongside a range of related and associated crimes, such as document forgery, vessel identity fraud, tax evasion and modern day slavery. Activity at sea is difficult to monitor and oversee, making regulations and laws hard to enforce.**

The fisheries sector is very important for Ghana's economy and also our coastal communities, with income derived from fishing and related activities, constituting around 60% of total household incomes. Tema and Takoradi are key ports providing offloading, bunkering and repair services for fishing vessels, support vessels and reefers. The exports of

high value fish such as frozen tuna, tuna loins and canned tuna loins, and crab and lobster bring valuable export earnings to our economy.

However, illegal operators target ports with weak controls and this in turn leads to possible identification as ports of convenience or ports of non-compliance. This happened in 2013, when the European Union imposed a warning or 'yellow card' to Ghana, identifying weak monitoring, control and surveillance, and insufficient port controls as key challenges for us to identify and stop illegally caught fish from being caught and landed in our ports.



## ILLEGAL FISHING DESTROYS OUR FISHERIES

- Industrial IUU fishing leads to overfishing and depletion of fish stocks.
- Damaging fishing methods cause ecological and environmental damage to habitats essential for healthy coasts and oceans.



## ILLEGAL FISHING DAMAGES OUR ECONOMY

- By stealing Ghana's fish, the illegal fishers are stealing our wealth.
- Illegal fish when entering the market distorts prices and reduces the value of legally caught fish.



## ILLEGAL FISHING HARMS OUR PEOPLE

- Industrial IUU fishing puts traditional fishers' livelihoods at risk by putting excessive pressure on our fish stocks which can lead to reduced catches for small scale fishers.
- Illegal operators do not play by the rules, this means that crew and observers can be at high risk of threats, abuse and violence, this happens out at sea far from any help.



## WHY DO WE NEED A PORTS TASK FORCE?

We want to be effective at keeping illegally caught fish out of our ports. To ensure our fisheries, economy and people are protected from illegal operators and the harm they bring to us all.

Port States are responsible under international law to control and monitor fishing vessels entering and using their ports and fish being moved through their ports. We want to be a responsible port State and to implement our international obligations. As all fish must be landed, and industrially caught fish must pass through a port to be traded and consumed, we are working to prevent vessels carrying illegally caught fish from accessing our ports.



### PROTECTING OUR PORTS:

- Refusing known or suspected IUU vessels access to our ports.
- Identifying high-risk vessels for inspection or investigation.
- Working hand-in-hand across agencies to ensure that illegal operators are identified, sanctioned, and stopped.
- Establishing systems and procedures that reduce the risk of corruption.



### PROTECTING OUR FISHERIES:

- Checking and inspecting vessels to ensure that fishing activity is sustainable, with catch coming from authorised areas and that the correct gear type is used.
- Checking that protected or endangered species are not targeted.
- Increasing compliance in the industrial sector to also support sustainable practices in the artisanal sector.



### PROTECTING OUR ECONOMY:

- Identifying under-reporting or misreporting of catches which reduces taxes.
- Shutting down illegal operators who launder money and avoid paying taxes.
- Systematically targeting repeat offenders who systematically conduct illegal fishing.
- Ensuring that Ghanas' ports are clean and compliant so that the country can benefit from blue growth.



### PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE:

- Promoting a legitimate and equitable environment for all fishers and their communities.
- Checking crew and observer conditions to ensure that decent working and living conditions are provided.
- Checking that vessels are safe for those working on them.

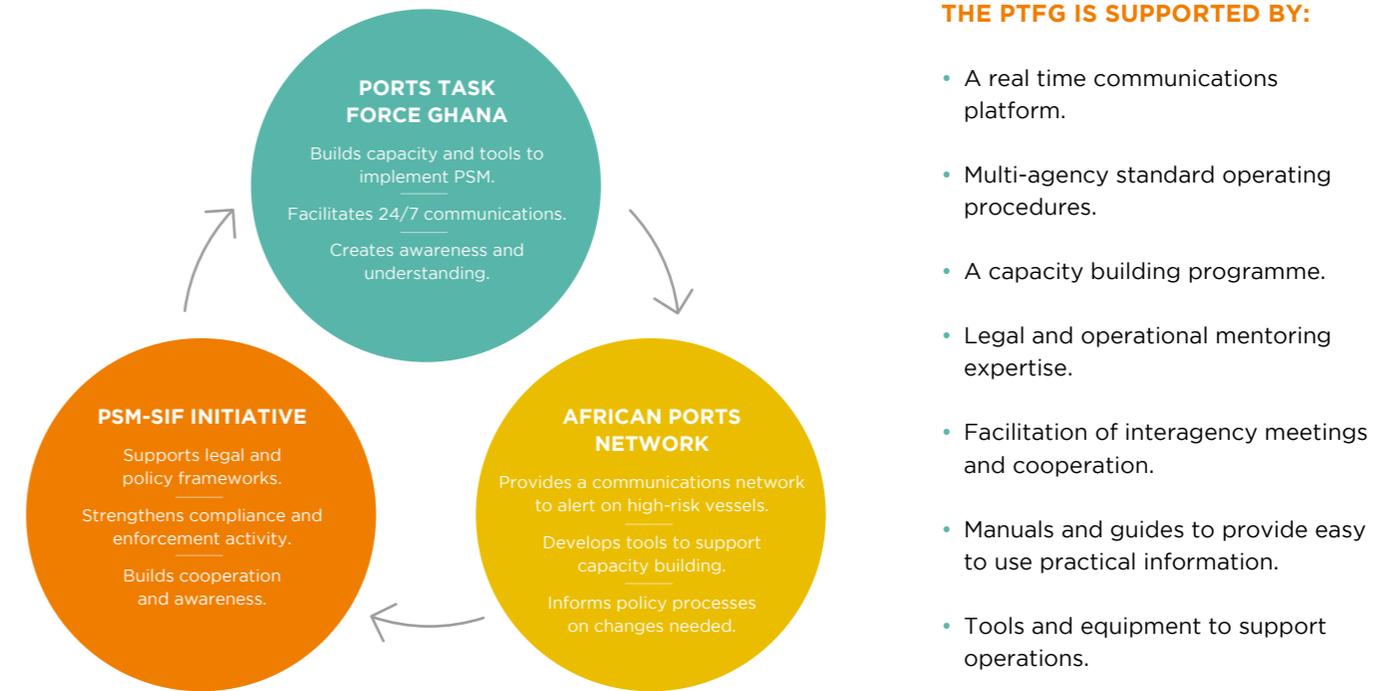


# HOW DOES PORTS TASK FORCE GHANA WORK?

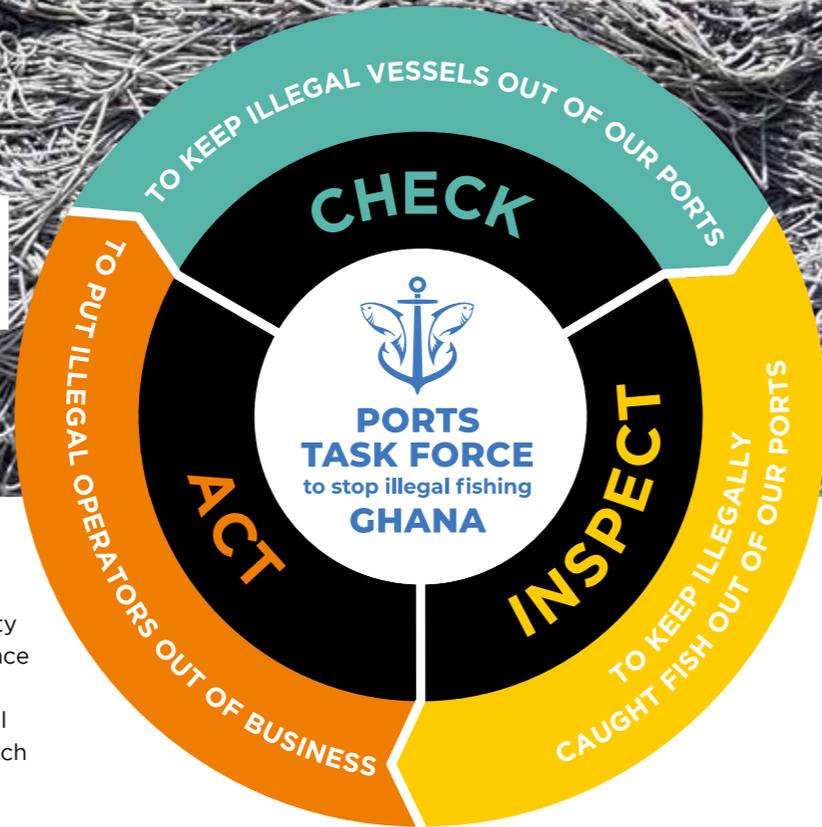
The PTFG is working to operationalize the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA) and complimentary international instruments and mechanisms.

The global PSMA came into force in 2016 and enables port officials to deny foreign vessels access to their port, and to services such as refueling and repairs, if they are suspected of illegal activities. Vessels can be turned away or subjected to immediate inspection on arrival and prohibited from landing their fish if there is evidence that it was caught or transhipped illegally.

The PTFG is supporting agencies to work together to stop illegal fishing vessels entering our ports, and to stop illegally caught fish from being landed. The PTFG is supported by the Ports State Measures To Stop Illegal Fishing (PSM-SIF) initiative and is a part of the African Ports Network.



# WHAT DOES PORTS TASK FORCE GHANA DO?



## CHECK

Checks can reveal illegal activity such as vessel identity fraud, illegal fishing activity, a history of non-compliance or unauthorised activity such as transshipment at-sea before the vessel arrives in port. A risk assessment will indicate what type of follow-up activity is required, such as targeting an inspection when high-risk vessels are identified.



### VESSEL

- Identity
- History
- Documents
- Non-compliance record
- Photographs



### CATCH

- Authorisation to fish**
  - Flag State
  - Coastal State
  - RFMO
- Activity of vessel**
  - Tracking data
- Gear**
  - Compatible to authorisations



### PLAYERS

- History of owner and operator**
  - Records of non-compliance
- Crew risk factors**
  - Country of origin
  - Previous issues



### VESSEL

- Identity**
  - IMO number
- Characteristics and markings**
  - Photographs
  - Records
  - Documents
- Safety**

## INSPECT

Inspections are essential to verify information supplied with the actual vessel documents and to make physical checks of the catch that can be crosschecked with logbook, positional data, cargo manifesto or the offloading bill. Inspections can be targeted or routine depending on the findings in the checking phase.



### CATCH

- Species**
  - Type and volumes
  - Product form
  - By-catch species
- Fishing activity**
  - Gear
  - Tracking data
  - Logbooks



### PLAYERS

- Crew risk factors**
  - Living conditions
  - Working conditions

## ACT

Follow-up action is required when illegal activities are identified or suspected in order to disrupt operations, add cost to business and stop repeat offenders from operating. This will prevent and deter illegal fishing and the trade in illegally caught fish. Recording and reporting when no illegal activity is evidenced or suspected is also important and this may include sharing information nationally and regionally.



### INFORM

- Relevant Authorities**
  - National agencies
  - Flag States
  - Regional task forces
  - RFMO
  - INTERPOL
- Alert neighbouring states**



### INITIATE

- Investigation**
- Detain/impound**
  - Vessel
  - Catch
- Confiscate**
  - Catch
  - Gear
- IUU listing**



### PROSECUTE

- Owners**
- Operators**



## WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE PORTS TASK FORCE GHANA?

The PTFG is coordinated by the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Division of Ghana's Fisheries Commission, and our mission is to support the implementation of effective port State measures in Ghana's ports.

By working in partnership with the key agencies involved in the identification, investigation and prosecution of illegal fishing, the trade in illegally caught fish and crimes in the fisheries sector, the PTFG will help to keep illegally caught fish out of its' ports and deter illegal operators from fishing in our waters and using our ports.

### PTFG MEMBERS INCLUDE:

- Fisheries Commission
- Marine Police
- Navy
- Ports and Harbour Authority
- Maritime Authority
- National Security
- Attorney General's Office
- Immigration Service
- Air Force
- Revenue Authority
- Food and Drugs Authority
- Bureau of National Investigation
- Port Health Services

The Ports Task Force Ghana is working to implement the National Strategy and Action Plan for the implementation of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and complimentary international instruments and mechanisms. The impact of this work is anticipated to improve opportunities for blue growth and to contribute to the generation of food, nutrition and socio-economic development that will help end poverty and hunger in Ghana and Africa.

The Ports Task Force Ghana is supported by Stop Illegal Fishing, with funding from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).



For more information on the Ports Task Force Ghana and its work go to:  
[www.stopillegalfishing.org](http://www.stopillegalfishing.org)  
[www.mofad.gov.gh](http://www.mofad.gov.gh)

