

South Africa



Organization: ABALOBI

Location: Western Cape Province, South Africa

Solution: Empowering fishers through supply chain tracking and direct connections with buyers

Factsheet Period: First round of UNDP AFCIA funding (16 months)



Traditional small-scale fishing vessels at the harbour in Struisbaai, one of ABALOBI's flagship communities. @ABALOBI

Small-scale fishers often lack access to essential infrastructure, technology and fair market opportunities, leaving them vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and systemic shocks. ABALOBI offers fishers access to training, technology, financial services, better cold storage and supply chain tracking. This empowers fishers to connect directly with buyers and boost their profits. Under a digital marketplace ('Fish With A Story'), traceability technology captures where catch has come from and tracks markets, directing fishers to higher price catches.



Key achievements

- Provided food to 79,870 people via community-supported fisheries sales, helping over 7,000 households during droughts
- Increased product demand by 35% through better market access, cold chain, and logistics
- Approximately 2,000 fishers registered with the digital marketplace, with 445 active users
- Created a new insurance model, improving fishers' access to savings and loans, including business cash advances. Significantly enhanced food security of fisher families: After one year in the programme, 88% of participating fishers reported their household as being food secure, largely due to a 100-300% increase in their income
- Linked small-scale fishers to the Marketplace, a digital platform where they can sell their local catch directly to buyers. Along with this, fishers benefit from a digital app to log their catch and expenses, and receive training in financial literacy, marketing, cold chain logistics and organizational development



Innovation

- Community-driven model with over 60% of the team coming from fishing communities
- Draws on local expertise, promoting local ownership
- Enhances fish quality through advanced cold chain and processing techniques
- Provides tailored financial services for economic resilience
- Improves traceability and efficiency using blockchain technology and a mobile app
- Supports fishers in sustainably harvesting fish using traditional tools and techniques



Funding snapshot

- UNDP-AFCIA grant: US\$125,000 (initial grant)




Adaptation benefits

- Enhanced fisher resilience to climate shocks
- Improved food security of fisher communities
- Increased financial stability
- Strengthened regional food security via expanded markets and distributor networks
- Healthier ecosystems as a result of reduced pressure on overfished species (focus on abundant, underfished species)



Social impact

- Strengthened resilience of fisher communities to climate change
- Formalization of women's roles in fisheries, resulting in fairer pay and job creation



Replication potential

- Fisher-owned collectives enabled to operate sustainably beyond ABALOBİ's tech and marketplace support
- ICT solutions, co-designed with local fishers, aim for global replication in small-scale fisheries. These solutions have been tested across 12 countries in Africa, South America, Europe, Micronesia and the Western Indian Ocean region
- Increased demand for local fish, onboarding more fishers
- Integrated financial services link fishers with formal financial opportunities

Investability	
Revenue per annum	<p>Annual revenue of \$330,000, without charging fishers a fee to sell their catch on the marketplace platform</p> <p>A small logistics fee is levied on sales, which is covered by the buyer</p> <p>On average, 10 tonnes of seafood are sold per month (120 tonnes annually) through the ABALOBİ marketplace</p>
Sustaining criteria	<p>Funded by Marketplace revenue and grants. Targeting self-sustainability by early 2025, when revenue reaches 15 tonnes per month</p>
Financial innovation	<p>In-house Business Cash Advance product; bespoke savings for fishers linked to digital marketplace income; and a pilot life insurance project to be offered to all registered South African fishers in Q1 2025</p>