RISE UP
for the Ocean

Coastal Communities and Offshore Wind Development

International Perspectives from six countries

India . Philippines . South Africa
Namibia . Colombia . Brazil





WAFA Representative, Namibia - Shiwaovanhu Paulus - © TNC 3

Contributing Organizations

This report brings together research and perspectives from six countries, with contributions from:

Coordination

RISE UP – For the Ocean

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About This Report

This report presents a global synthesis of six country studies conducted in India, the Philippines, South Africa, Namibia, Colombia and Brazil. It examines the relationship between offshore wind development, small-scale fisheries and coastal communities, highlighting implications for a just and inclusive energy transition.

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1. Executive summary

Offshore wind is emerging as an important part of the energy transition, bringing development into marine and coastal areas that already support small-scale fisheries (SSF), ecosystems and coastal livelihoods. This raises questions about how projects may interact with people who depend on these areas for their livelihoods, food security, cultural practices and ways of life.

This report examines these questions across six countries: India, the Philippines, South Africa, Namibia, Colombia and Brazil, with particular attention to SSF and coastal communities. The report draws primarily on qualitative stakeholder and community interviews, alongside policy, documentary and technical analysis. Research approaches varied across the country studies, with Brazil based on technical and documentary analysis. [1–6]

> As offshore wind expands, its growing demand for marine space creates both opportunities and challenges for existing marine users, particularly small-scale fisheries and local communities

The countries represent different contexts and stages of offshore wind development, from prospective planning and licensing to experimental testing. Together, they provide insight into community priorities and concerns before offshore wind becomes established at commercial scale in many of these settings. Across the six countries, there is no single community position for or against offshore wind. Perspectives vary according to local livelihoods, previous experiences, governance arrangements and the stage of development. Instead, community responses are shaped by how development is planned, who participates in decisions, how existing uses of marine space are recognised, how potential impacts are addressed and how benefits are distributed. [1–6]

Offshore wind does not enter an empty ocean. Development takes place within marine spaces already used for fishing, navigation, conservation, tourism and other activities, often alongside wider environmental and socioeconomic pressures. Offshore wind therefore needs to be considered in relation to the livelihoods, ecosystems and existing uses of the marine spaces in which it is introduced.



Indigenous spearfishers in the Alabat Island, The Philippines © Tambuyog Development Center

1.1

Key findings

01 Participation

Meaningful participation requires influence, not just consultation.

Communities need early and accessible information, inclusive representation and opportunities to influence decisons before key choices are fixed.

02 Marine space

Offshore wind enters already-used and increasingly pressured marine spaces.

Fishing grounds, navigation, ecosystems, conservation and other marine uses need to be considered together through spatial planning and cumulative assessment.

03 Livelihoods

Impacts can extend beyond fishing activity.

Potential effects can reach fish processors, traders, women fishworkers, households, local markets and other parts of SSF value chains.

04 Trust and benefits

Trust depends on transparency, safeguards and tangible local benefits

Clear commitments on environmental and livelihood protection, accountability, grievance and remedy, and locally relevant benefits are important to community responses.

Taken together, the country reports point to a need to move from reactive consultation towards proactive planning with coastal communities. Engagement needs to begin early enough for communities to influence decisions, rather than simply respond once major choices have already been made.

Fishing grounds and other community uses should be made visible in marine planning, and local and traditional ecological knowledge should complement scientific and technical evidence.

Planning also needs to look beyond individual projects and direct impacts on fishing activity. Cumulative environmental and socioeconomic pressures, as well as effects across SSF value chains, should be considered. This includes potential consequences for processors, traders, women fishworkers, households and local markets, alongside impacts on fishers themselves.

Transparent environmental and livelihood safeguards, accessible grievance and remedy mechanisms, clear accountability and locally relevant benefit arrangements are also important. Addressing these issues early can help reduce conflict, advance trust and create more credible pathways for offshore wind development alongside existing coastal livelihoods.

2. Background: General context



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The transition away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy has become an important part of global efforts to address climate change, advance energy security and meet growing energy demand. Renewable energy sources are expanding across different sectors and geographies, including in marine and coastal areas.Offshore wind is one area where these interactions are becoming increasingly visible.

The shift toward a low-carbon economy also raises questions about its social, economic and environmental implications. These concerns are reflected in the concept of a just transition, which considers how the costs, benefits and opportunities associated with energy transitions are experienced across different groups.[10]

In marine and coastal settings, these questions intersect with existing livelihoods, food systems, biodiversity, resource use, cultural practices and coastal economies.

Offshore wind illustrates this challenge. Its development can contribute to climate and energy objectives, but it also introduces new infrastructure and activities into marine areas already supporting fisheries, shipping, conservation, tourism and other uses.

Understanding how offshore wind interacts with these existing relationships is essential to planning an energy transition that is environmentally sustainable and socially equitable.

2.1

Offshore wind: opportunities and considerations

Offshore wind energy generates electricity through turbines installed in marine environments, using either fixed-bottom foundations or floating platforms. Despite recent project delays, cost pressures and supply-chain constraints, the offshore wind sector is expected to expand significantly over the remainder of the decade.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) latest medium-term renewables forecast projects around 140 GW of additional offshore wind capacity globally between 2025 and 2030, although recent deployment trends highlight continued near-term challenges for the sector.[7] The World Bank (2019) estimated approximately 3.1 TW of technical offshore wind potential across eight emerging markets, including Brazil, India, the Philippines and South Africa, all four of which are covered in this study.[8]

> Offshore wind development can introduce new demand for marine space in areas already used for small-scale fishing, shipping, tourism, conservation and other activities

Offshore wind development involves more than turbines. Projects may include fixed foundations or floating platforms, submarine cables, offshore substations, installation and maintenance vessels, port facilities, cable landing points and onshore grid connections. Their spatial footprint can therefore intersect with fishing grounds, navigation routes, marine habitats, ports, coastal areas and other established uses of marine space.

Offshore wind can bring new investment, infrastructure, employment, skills development and opportunities for local communities. Its development can also introduce a new demand for marine space in areas already used for SSF, shipping, tourism, conservation and other activities. These interactions vary according to project design, location, regulatory arrangements, existing marine uses and local social and environmental conditions.



Fishing Boat with Wind Turbines at Sea | Via Pexels © Chí Trung Lê.

2.2

Small-scale fisheries and coastal livelihoods

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) are closely connected to coastal and nearshore waters, typically involving smaller vessels, relatively low levels of capital and technology and shorter fishing trips. They also support activities beyond harvesting, including processing, transportation, trading and marketing.

Globally, SSF account for at least 40% of capture fisheries catch and approximately 90% of employment across capture fisheries value chains. An estimated 60.2 million people are employed in SSF value chains, while around 492 million depend at least partly on the sector for their livelihoods. Women play an important role throughout these value chains, particularly in processing, trading and other pre- and post-harvest activities.[9]

+ 40%

of global capture fisheries catch comes from SSF

Beyond employment and income, SSF contribute to food and nutrition security, cultural identity, traditional knowledge and coastal community livelihoods. Approximately 69% of marine SSF catch is harvested within 10 km of the shoreline, highlighting the importance of access to nearshore fishing grounds.[9]

SSF operate in marine areas already subject to pressures from shipping, tourism, aquaculture, coastal infrastructure, pollution and climate change. Offshore wind development introduces an additional potential demand for marine space, reinforcing the importance of considering SSF activities and existing pressures in marine spatial planning.

60.2 M

people employed in SSF value chains



Mullet fishing Walvis Bay © Namibia Nature Foundation

2.3

Just transition, marine planning and participation

The interaction between offshore wind and SSF raises important questions concerning participation, recognition, access to marine space, livelihood impacts and the equitable distribution of costs and benefits.

As marine space becomes increasingly contested, it is essential to ensure that the transition to renewable energy takes place in a way that respects the rights and knowldege of fishing communities while supporting climate and biodiversity goals.

The eight core principles of a Just Energy Transformation, developed by the Alliance for a Just Energy Transformation, provide a framework for examining these questions.[10] The principles emphasize science-based climate action, fairness and respect for rights, sustainable and consistent strategies, transparency and inclusion, meaningful stakeholder engagement, climate justice, access to clean energy, and access to justice, information and decision-making. Together, they highlight the importance of ensuring that the transition to renewable energy is environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and equitable.



Via Pexels © Lange X

Eight core principles of a Just Energy Transition

01 Science-based climate action	02 Fairness and respect for rights
03 Sustainable and consistent strategies	04 Transparency and inclusion
05 Meaningful stakehoolder engagement	06 Climate justice
07 Access to clean energy	08 Access to justice, information and decision-making

Source: Adapted from Alliance for a Just Energy Transformation

These considerations arise at different stages of offshore wind development, from national policy and marine spatial planning to site identification, environmental assessment, project development, construction and operation. They may also affect different groups within fishing communities, including vessel owners, crew members, women working in SSF value chains, traditional and Indigenous communities, informal workers, traders, processors and others whose livelihoods are connected to SSF.

The representation of SSF in marine planning is particularly relevant. Fishing activities may be seasonal, mobile, informal or based on customary practices and may not always be fully represented in official statistics or spatial datasets. Local ecological knowledge can provide valuable information about fishing grounds, species movements, spawning areas, navigation routes, seasonal patterns and environmental change. Meaningful participation and access to information are therefore important considerations when assessing how fishing communities are included in planning and decision-making processes.

> Fishing activities may be seasonal, mobile, informal or based on customary practices and may not always be fully represented in official statistics or spatial datasets

These issues are closely linked to Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), which is increasingly used to coordinate activities within marine areas. By the end of 2023, 114 countries and territories were engaged in MSP initiatives.[11] Offshore wind development can bring fisheries, shipping, conservation, tourism, energy infrastructure and other marine uses into the same planning processes, highlighting the importance of considering existing activities, competing interests and community perspectives.

The relationship between offshore wind and SSF may also involve economic impacts and opportunities. Potential concerns include changes in fishing access, navigation, travel distances, fuel costs, landing areas and marine ecosystems. Potential opportunities include employment, training, local procurement, infrastructure investment and community-level benefits. Where adverse impacts occur, questions of mitigation, compensation, livelihood restoration, coexistence and benefit sharing may also arise. These considerations are relevant to the principles of fairness, climate justice and equitable participation in the energy transition.

Examining these interactions through the principles of a Just Energy Transformation provides a basis for understanding how a just transition is being interpreted and experienced in the context of offshore wind development and small-scale fisheries.



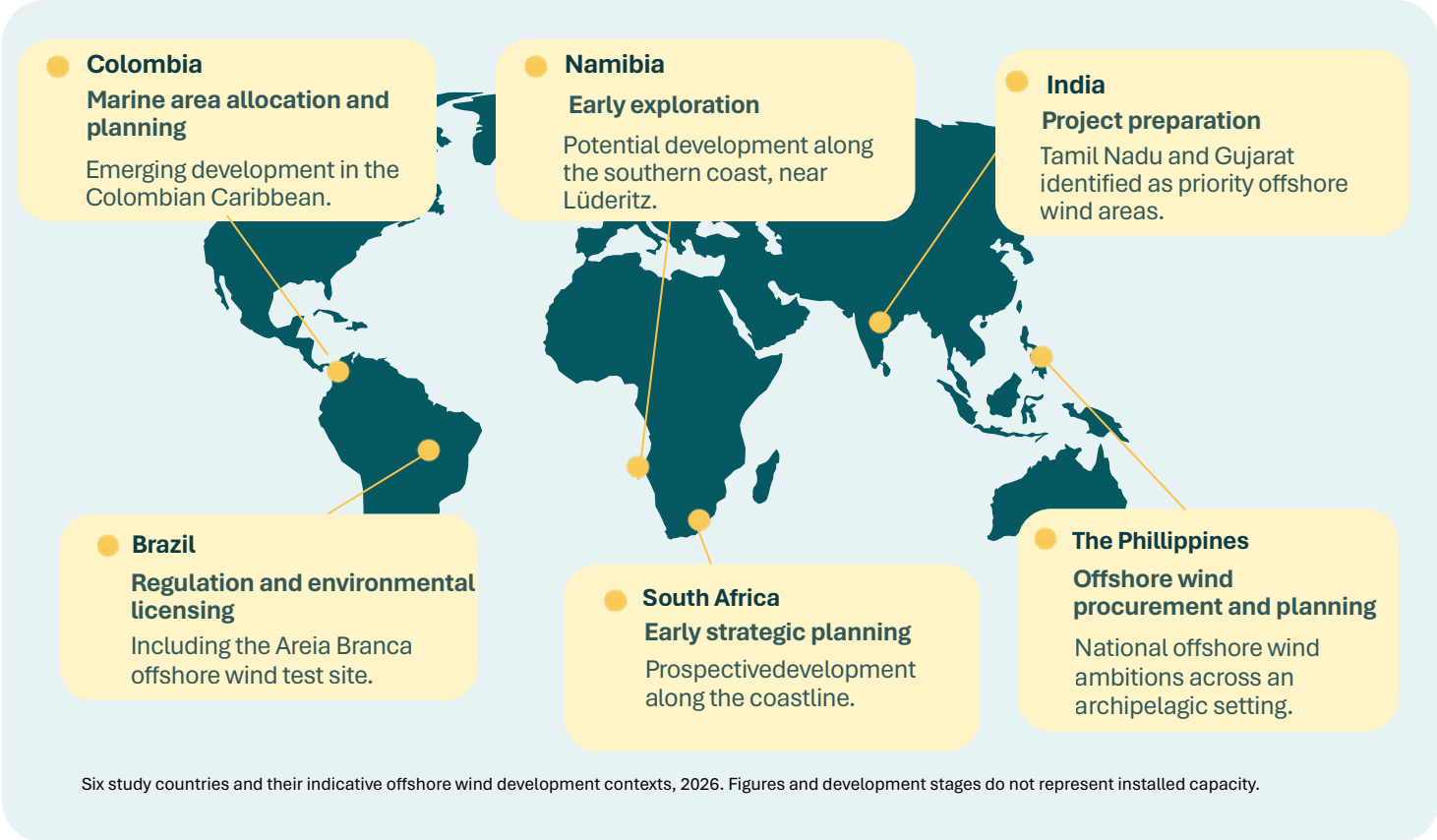
Via Pexels © Li Wenqi

2.4

Six countries, different starting points

This report draws on research from India, the Philippines, South Africa, Namibia, Colombia and Brazil, spanning different stages of offshore wind development, from early exploration and strategic planning to project preparation and environmental licensing. Together, these countries provide a range of settings in which offshore wind development may interact with small-scale fisheries (SSF), coastal livelihoods and existing uses of marine space. [1–6]

The map and tables illustrate these different starting points. The development stages and figures shown are indicative rather than directly comparable: technical wind potential, national ambitions and project development do not represent equivalent measures of progress.



Six study countries and their indicative offshore wind development contexts, 2026. Figures and development stages do not represent installed capacity.

The six country studies offer different perspectives on the relationship between offshore wind development, small-scale fisheries and a just transition. The table below summarises the offshore wind context in each country and the specific coastal and fisheries considerations relevant to the research.

Country	Offshore wind context	Relevance to SSF and a just transition
India	India has approximately 71 GW of identified offshore wind potential off Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, with initial projects under preparation. [12]	Extensive fishing activities and customary relationships with marine space provide an important context for project siting, community participation and access to fishing grounds.
Philippines	The Philippines projects 19–50 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2050, with project development advancing. [13]	As an archipelagic country, the Philippines has close connections between coastal fishing livelihoods, marine ecosystems and the spatial demands of emerging energy infrastructure.
South Africa	Offshore wind remains at an early stage, with strategic planning and project proposals but no operating offshore wind farms reported in the country study. [14]	Existing small-scale fishing rights, marine spatial planning processes and coastal livelihoods form part of the context for considering future offshore wind development.
Namibia	Offshore wind remains prospective, with interest in potential development along the southern coastline, particularly near Lüderitz. [15]	Potential offshore wind areas intersect with a marine environment already used for fishing, conservation, tourism and other activities, alongside an emerging national policy framework for SSF.
Colombia	Colombia has established an Offshore Wind Roadmap and launched a competitive process for allocating maritime areas for offshore wind development. [16]	Offshore wind planning in the Caribbean intersects with artisanal fishing territories, navigation routes, landing areas and wider coastal livelihood activities.
Brazil	Brazil has approximately 700 GW of technical offshore wind potential in waters up to 50 metres deep.[17] Offshore wind regulation and environmental licensing are progressing, including the Areia Branca test site.	Environmental assessment and licensing processes provide a context for examining how existing fisheries, marine ecosystems and coastal communities are considered in proposed developments.

Across these different contexts, the research asks: Who has access to information? Who participates in decisions? How are fishing grounds, livelihoods, customary practices, and local knowledge recognized? What risks and opportunities do communities identify? And how can the benefits and burdens of offshore wind development be shared more fairly?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research approach

Research methods were adapted to local contexts. India, South Africa, Namibia and Colombia primarily used qualitative interviews with fishers and community representatives to explore participation, livelihoods, concerns and expectations around offshore wind.

The Philippines combined stakeholder interviews and policy review, drawing on onshore wind experiences to examine community participation, environmental impacts, livelihoods and accountability.

Brazil used technical and documentary evidence to assess environmental licensing for the experimental Areia Branca Offshore Wind Turbine Testing Site.

The report brings these different sources of evidence together to highlight common themes, shared priorities and important differences across the six country contexts, while recognising the specific circumstances and methodological approaches of each research component. The findings are therefore presented as international perspectives rather than as a directly comparable cross-country survey.

Country	Research approach	Geographic focus	Participants and evidence focus
India	Qualitative field research using semi-structured interviews	Nine fishing villages in Kanyakumari and Thoothukudi districts, Tamil Nadu	Interviews with fishers, community leaders, activists and cooperative representatives, focusing on consultation, FPIC, representation, traditional knowledge and community priorities.
Philippines	Review of renewable-energy policies and stakeholder interviews	Alabat Island	Stakeholder interviews and policy review examining renewable energy, marine spatial planning, SSF, ecosystems, livelihoods, mitigation and accountability.
South Africa	Community-based interviews	Eastern and Western Cape	34 participants; explored offshore wind awareness, community participation, SSF, biodiversity, livelihood concerns and potential benefits.
Namibia	Semi-structured interviews	Swakopmund, Walvis Bay and Lüderitz	10 fishers (6 men, 4 women) from five organizations; examined fishing access, marine space, conservation, participation, benefits and coexistence.
Colombia	Semi-structured qualitative interviews	Atlántico, Bolívar, Magdalena and La Guajira	10 participants (7 men, 3 women) from fishing and related livelihoods, including Afro-descendant, Wayuu and Mocaná communities.
Brazil	Technical and documentary assessment	Areia Branca, Rio Grande do Norte	Documentary and technical assessment of offshore wind testing-site licensing, supported by secondary evidence on fishing communities, participation and marine-space use.

3.2 **Cross-country Analysis**

The country studies identified a wider range of concerns and priorities that can be presented individually. Therefore, this global synthesis analysis examined the evidence across the six countries and grouped recurring themes into four interconnected themes:

1. Meaningful participation and influence
2. Marine space and cumulative pressures
3. Wider SSF livelihoods and value chains
4. Trust, safeguards and local benefits

These themes provide a clearer framework for understanding what the six countries collectively suggest about community-centered offshore wind development.

They should not be interpreted as identical findings across all six countries. Some themes are particularly prominent in certain studies, while evidence is more limited in others. Country-specific evidence and differences are therefore retained within each theme rather than being presented as universally shared experiences.



Wind turbines seen from the shore in Alabat Island, The Philippines © Tambuyog Development Center

4. Key findings at a glance

Across the six countries, four interconnected findings emerge. The evidence supporting each finding varies across countries, reflecting differences in research methods, participants, local contexts and stages of offshore wind development. The table below highlights the country evidence particularly relevant to each finding; it does not imply that every theme appeared with the same prominence across the research. The following sections examine these findings in greater detail.

Key finding	Particularly relevant country evidence	What the evidence shows
Meaningful participation requires awareness and influence, not just consultation	India, Colombia, South Africa, Brazil	India highlights the timing and inclusiveness of consultation, representation and recognition of traditional ecological knowledge. Colombia and South Africa show how limited awareness and access to information can constrain meaningful participation. Brazil demonstrates why the quality and effectiveness of participation matter alongside the existence of formal participatory processes.
Offshore wind enters already-used and increasingly pressured marine spaces	Namibia, Colombia, Philippines	Namibia highlights interactions among SSF, conservation and tourism. Colombia shows that fishing territories extend beyond fishing grounds to navigation, landing and wider ecological, social and cultural relationships. The Philippines highlights the close relationship among SSF, sensitive marine ecosystems and conservation.
Impacts can extend beyond fishing activity	India, Colombia, Philippines	India and Colombia demonstrate that SSF livelihoods extend beyond people who fish at sea to processing, trading, marketing and other activities, including important roles played by women. The Philippines further highlights the relationship between marine ecosystems, SSF livelihoods and food security.
Trust depends on transparency, safeguards and tangible local benefits	Namibia, South Africa, India, Philippines	Namibia shows that acceptance can be conditional on early information, fishing access, safeguards and visible local benefits. South Africa records differing perspectives alongside livelihood and biodiversity concerns. India highlights the importance of credible commitments, while the Philippines emphasizes monitoring, grievance mechanisms and livelihood measures.

4.1 - Finding 1

Meaningful participation requires awareness and influence, not just consultation

Early information, inclusive representation and a genuine role in decision-making

Across the studies, a recurring distinction emerges between being informed about offshore wind development and having meaningful influence over decisions. Consultation can provide information and opportunities to raise concerns, but meaningful participation also depends on when engagement begins, who is represented, whether information is accessible and whether community contributions can influence decisions.

This is particularly important where awareness of offshore wind remains limited. In Colombia, for example, seven of the 10 participants reported low knowledge of offshore wind, while the South African study similarly found low levels of awareness among participants. These findings suggest that providing accessible information early in the planning process is a prerequisite for meaningful participation rather than evidence that participation has already occurred.

Representation also matters. Fishing communities are not homogeneous, and consultation through established representatives may not capture the perspectives of women, younger fishers, shore-based workers and others who depend on SSF. The India study particularly highlights gaps in the representation of women fishworkers and the importance of incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into planning.

Brazil adds a different perspective: the documentary review identifies limitations in the characterisation of marine-space users and raises concerns about the adequacy of participation in the Areia Branca licensing process. These are conclusions from a review of documentation, not findings from a comparable community interview exercise. [6]

Taken together, the study results draws on early engagement, accessible and clear information, inclusive stakeholder mapping, recognition of community knowledge and a clear account of how community contributions influence planning, assessment and project design.



Walvis Bay Artisanal Fisheries Association Representative Amazing Saul

4.2 - Finding 2

Offshore wind enters already-used and increasingly pressured marine space

Fishing grounds, ecosystems and competing uses need to be considered together

Offshore wind development does not enter an empty ocean. Across the studies, prospective development is situated within marine spaces already supporting SSF, navigation, conservation, tourism, cultural practices and ecologically important habitats. The spatial footprint of development can also extend beyond individual turbines through cables, substations, ports, construction routes and associated access arrangements.

For fishing communities, marine space extends beyond identifiable fishing grounds. It can include navigation routes, landing areas, seasonal fishing patterns, breeding and nursery areas and places carrying social or cultural significance. The Colombia report particularly emphasises the social and ecological dimensions of fishing territories and the need to document these relationships before decisions are taken.

These relationships become especially important where several uses overlap. In Namibia, potential offshore wind development around Lüderitz would need to be considered alongside SSF, conservation and tourism, including the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area. The study's emphasis on participatory mapping illustrates how fishing grounds, sensitive ecosystems and proposed infrastructure can be considered together before siting decisions become fixed.

The Philippines case shows how coastal ecosystems and fishing livelihoods can be connected to changes associated with nearby land-based energy infrastructure. Because the case concerns onshore turbines on Alabat Island, it should inform precautionary planning and assessment rather than be presented as evidence of offshore turbine impacts.

The findings also point to the importance of cumulative pressures. Offshore wind may be introduced into areas already affected by other industries, infrastructure, conservation measures or environmental change. Planning and assessment should therefore consider offshore wind as one component of a wider marine system rather than evaluating projects in isolation.

4.3 - Finding 3

Impacts can extend beyond fishing activity

Changes at sea can affect SSF value chains, households and coastal communities

SSF are not limited to people who fish at sea. They support interconnected systems of harvesting, landing, processing, trading, transport, marketing, household consumption and community organization. Potential changes to fishing access, catches or marine ecosystems can therefore extend through value chains, households and coastal communities.

This is particularly visible in the India evidence. Tamil Nadu records more than 77,000 people engaged in fisheries-allied activities, including more than 35,000 in selling and marketing, alongside people working in net-making and repair, processing and labour. These figures illustrate how changes affecting fishing activity can have consequences well beyond those directly operating fishing vessels.

The findings also draw attention to groups whose economic roles may be less visible in formal decision-making. Women, for example, may occupy important roles in processing and selling while being less represented in consultation and governance structures. The Colombia interviews similarly included women involved in processing and selling fish and shrimp alongside fishers, traders and other coastal livelihood actors.

Assessments based only on registered fishers or vessels risk overlooking processors, traders, vendors, gleaners, transport workers and households. Baseline studies and compensation or livelihood-restoration planning should identify these relationships before potential changes occur.



Fish Sales Representative,Asociación de Cultivadores de Sueños y Esperanzas para Pueblo Viejo (ASOCULSUEPAV) Pueblo Viejo, Magdalena, Colombia © Fundación Batis

4.4 - Finding 4

Trust depends on transparency, safeguards and tangible local benefits

Accountability, credible protections and locally relevant benefits shape community responses

Community responses to offshore wind should not be reduced to a simple distinction between support and opposition. Across the studies, perspectives were shaped by the conditions under which development might occur, including access to information, fishing access, environmental protection, livelihood safeguards, accountability and potential local benefits. Concerns should therefore not automatically be interpreted as opposition, just as interest in employment or participation in consultation should not be interpreted as consent or support.

Namibia illustrates this clearly: interviewees recognized possible employment, income and electricity benefits while emphasising conditions related to fishing access, environmental safeguards and meaningful engagement. South Africa records differing perspectives and concerns about livelihoods, biodiversity and the credibility of development processes.

The India study highlights the importance of clear commitments and opportunities to negotiate project conditions rather than merely respond to predetermined proposals. The Philippines report recommends monitoring, grievance arrangements and livelihood measures in response to the concerns examined in its Alabat case; these should be attributed to the study where they are not directly documented as participant demands.

Local jobs, procurement and skills development may contribute to community benefits, but they cannot substitute for protection of fishing access, credible environmental assessment, accountable decision-making or fair remedy where harm occurs. Trust is more likely to be sustained where responsibilities are explicit, commitments are documented and implementation can be monitored.



A small-scale fishing (SSF) family on the shore of Alabat Island, Philippines.
© Tambuyog Development Cente

4. Way forward

The following actions translate the cross-country evidence into practical priorities. They are recommendations arising from this synthesis, informed by the country studies, rather than claims that every participant requested every measure.

1. Establish an early community engagement framework

Communities should be engaged before project sites are identified or licences are issued, rather than limiting participation to statutory public hearings as part of an environmental impact assessment. Engagement meetings should use accessible language, appropriate venues and timing, and provide opportunities to propose changes to project design, access arrangements and mitigation measures.Engagement should be grounded in the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC): early, informed and meaningful participation, with communities able to influence decisions that affect them. The India study specifically explores the relevance of FPIC for fishing communities with longstanding customary marine relationships.

Early engagement should introduce proposed developments, explain planning processes and provide opportunities for communities to influence decisions from the outset. Communities should have access to appropriate information and capacity building so they can understand proposals, ask questions and provide informed feedback.

2. Advance legal literacy and independent information

Communities need accessible information about the policy and legal frameworks governing offshore wind development in their country, including their rights and responsibilities. Information should be provided in clear, locally appropriate formats, including visual and pictorial materials where useful.

Communities should also be supported to understand relevant international instruments, such as the SSF Guidelines and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, and how these can be applied in their local context.

3. Develop community information and awareness programmes

Simple, locally adapted information packages should be provided on emerging marine developments, including how technologies work, project components, potential benefits and risks, timelines, rights and responsibilities and opportunities for participation. Information should be available in local languages and avoid technical jargon, using visual materials, community meetings, radio, videos and other accessible formats. These programmes should be delivered through trusted and locally appropriate channels.

Communities should have access to support from government, civil society organizations or other appropriate bodies that are separate from the project developer. This support should help communities understand proposals, marine spatial planning, environmental impact assessment processes, consultation procedures, compensation and co-benefit frameworks and relevant legal rights.

4. Support participatory mapping and cumulative assessment

Planning authorities and developers should work with fishing communities to map seasonal fishing grounds, navigation routes, landing areas, culturally significant places and ecologically sensitive habitats before site selection is finalised. Mapping should protect sensitive community knowledge where disclosure could cause harm. Environmental assessments should consider offshore wind alongside existing marine industries, conservation measures and environmental pressures and identify avoidance options before relying on compensation.

5. Assess wider SSF livelihoods and value chains for inclusion in decision making, compensation and co-benefit packages

Potential impacts on SSF can extend beyond people operating fishing vessels. Processing, trading, transportation, marketing and household activities can also depend on fishing.
Therefore, stakeholder mapping and engagement should go beyond registered fishing organizations to include women, youth, Indigenous peoples, value-chain actors and informal community leaders, where relevant. This can help ensure that livelihood impacts and community priorities are not overlooked. Communities thus identified should be included in decision making spaces, and also in the compensation and co-benefit packages.

6. Make safeguards, benefits and accountability operational

Multi-stakeholder platforms need to be developed. Active engagement of such platforms should continue throughout planning, construction, operation, monitoring and decommissioning with clear feedback on how decisions are made and how community input has influenced them.
Systems should be established to monitor commitments, environmental and livelihood impacts, address grievances and report back to communities and other stakeholders. Benefit-sharing arrangements, including local employment, procurement, skills development and community investment, should be agreed transparently before projects commence and reviewed regularly.

Communities should be able to see how their feedback has been considered in ongoing decision-making, including through adaptive management or project redesign. Commitments on jobs, procurement, training and community investment should be realistic, documented and periodically reviewed, without being presented as substitutes for avoiding harm.

5. Conclusion

The six studies suggest that a more equitable offshore wind transition requires more than technical siting and statutory consultation. It requires early and meaningful participation, recognition of existing marine uses and fisheries value chains, careful assessment of potential cumulative pressures, and credible safeguards and benefits. These priorities emerge from different types of evidence and should not be mistaken for uniform experiences or observed offshore wind impacts in all six countries. Their shared implication is that coastal communities should be involved in shaping development decisions before those decisions become difficult to change.

These findings reinforce the importance of connecting community-led evidence with ocean and climate policy. The six country studies offer a basis for continued dialogue among small-scale fishing organizations, coastal communities, researchers, civil society, governments and offshore wind decision-makers.



Fishing boat sails past offshore wind turbines in fog
Via Unplash © Heino Eisner

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