

## Processing

In general, Mauritanian fish products are sold with a low level of processing: fresh whole on the domestic market and frozen whole for exports. Processing stage includes only initial steps (heading, gutting, filleting) before being frozen, as well as traditional processing (drying and salting).

However, the fishmeal and fish oil industry has become more and more important mostly in Nouadhibou, and to a lesser extent in the area of Nouakchott.

Processing small pelagics into fishmeal and fish oil has become very important in the Mauritanian fishery industry. In 2006 only five factories were processing fishmeal and oil. In 2016 they were 40.

These factories are related to foreign investments (mainly Chinese and Turkish, and to a lesser extent, Moroccan and Russian).

In 2014, the volume of small pelagics processed into fishmeal was above 300,000 tonnes and is assessed to have been around 450,000 tonnes in 2017, according to the Mauritanian fisheries ministry.



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# FarFish

## MAURITANIA SFPA



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A consortium of 21 partners from 12 countries and 16 reference group members representing other countries and international organisations.

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H2020-SFS-21-2016: Advancing basic biological knowledge and improving management tools for commercially important fish and other seafood species

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## MAURITANIA SFPA

Mauritania is located at the extremity of West Africa, bordered by Western Sahara to the north and Senegal to the south. Its coastline is 720 km long. The Mauritanian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covers an estimated area of 234,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Mauritania has some of the world's most fish-abundant waters due to strong upwelling coastal currents and a large continental shelf favouring the development of fisheries resources.

Mauritania is an important partner of the EU in the field of fisheries through a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement giving the EU vessels access to the Mauritanian EEZ. However, the Mauritanian government is implementing a strategical plan aiming to develop and diversify its own fishery sector and benefit more from its EEZ richness.

The current four-year Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) entered into force in November 2015. Under the Protocol, the EU fleet is allowed to fish in Mauritanian waters for shrimp, demersal fish, tuna and pelagic fish, up to total of 287,050 tonnes a year. In addition to the fees paid by the European fleet, the EU pays a financial contribution of EUR 61,6 million per year for this partnership. A share of this amount aims to support local fishing communities and improve fisheries governance.



### Main features of the SFPA in Mauritania

Duration of SFPA	Six years, tacitly renewable: August 1, 2006 - July 31, 2012; August 1, 2012 - July 31, 2018
Effective date	August 1, 2006
Duration of the protocol	2 years: December 16, 2012 - December 15, 2014
Date of entry into force	Approved on October 8, 2013 by the European Parliament and adopted by the Council. November 15, 2013
Nature of the protocol	'Mixed' (multi-species) fisheries
Annual financial contribution	EUR 67 million and support for the implementation of the national policy of responsible and sustainable fishing of EUR 3 million
Fishing opportunities	For 9 categories of vessels giving access to species highly migratory, to crustaceans, demersal fish and species small pelagic species

Source: European Commission

## Landing by foreign operators

All catches by EU vessels are landed or transhipped in Mauritania. The small pelagics are transhipped to Gulf of Guinea countries (Nigeria and Ivory Coast in particular) as well as to Russia and neighbouring countries. Demersal species enter into the distribution cycle of the Spanish market.

The access of foreign fleets to Mauritanian fishing zones is made possible through bilateral agreements (EU), private arrangements with private companies (Chinese and Turkish for small pelagics and Japanese for tuna) or by the acquisition of private licenses.

From 2007 to 2013, industrial fishing represented between 85% and 90% of total reported catch by artisanal and industrial activities (1 million tonnes in 2012). About 90% of industrial catches were small pelagics of which 30% caught by EU vessels. In 2016, industrial catches reached 740,000 tonnes, according to national sources.

## Catches

Mauritanian legislation distinguishes three kinds of fishing: artisanal (canoes), coastal and industrial. The main species targeted are cephalopods (octopus, cuttlefish, squid), demersal fish (hake, breams, mullets, rays, sharks, etc.), crustaceans (shrimp, rocky lobster and deep-water crabs), small pelagics (sardinellas, sardines, horse mackerels, mackerels, etc.) and tunas.

Total annual catches in the Mauritanian EEZ reach between 800,000 and 1,2 million tonnes.



## Industrial fisheries

In contrast to the artisanal and coastal fleets, the industrial fleet targeting demersal species shrank as the number of vessels operating in the Mauritanian EEZ fell from 380 in 2002 to 137 in 2013. Cephalopods account for 70% of landing volumes (about 40,000 tonnes in total in 2013). In 2013, the industrial pelagic fleet operating in Mauritanian EEZ included about 50 vessels, most of them being foreign vessels. In 2013, eight seiners owned by a private Asian company operated under Mauritanian fishing license. After having reached a peak at 1,2 million tonnes in 2010, small pelagic industrial catches have been slightly but constantly declining, after several foreign vessels stopped their activity in Mauritanian waters. In 2013, industrial pelagic catches reached 600,000 tonnes, of which 40% were sardinellas. Tuna and tuna-like species fisheries involve vessels operating all along the West African coast. Tuna catches reached 47,000 tonnes in 2013.