

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTLOOKS AND FISHERIES CRIME

Summary of a dialogue forum on 24 September 2025 featuring Dr. Will Symes, Policy Analyst with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

1 Why do economic and environmental outlooks matter to fisheries crime?

- * Profitability strongly influences the scale and nature of illegal fishing
- * Global fisheries production is expected to remain relatively stable over the next decade, with regional gains where stocks are recovering
- * Climate change will reduce productivity in many regions and likely increase incentives for illegal fishing over the medium- to longer term
- * Shifting species distributions will alter where fishing occurs and where enforcement is required

2 What are the challenges?

- * Fishing subsidies can inflate fleet capacity and inadvertently support illegal fishing operations
- * Emerging trade restrictions introduce uncertainty that may push some operators toward illicit markets
- * Climate impacts will be uneven, reducing tropical productivity and increasing it in temperate zones
- * Moving fish stocks may weaken governance by shifting resources away from effective management and into jurisdictions with limited management capacity

3 What are potential strategies to mitigate these challenges?

- * Reducing the profitability of illegal fishing is essential amid increasing environmental uncertainty
- * Subsidy reforms should support sustainably managed stocks to avoid unintentionally strengthening illegal fishing-linked capacity
- * Practitioners should consult regulators and scientists to proactively anticipate economic and environmental shifts
- * Cross-jurisdictional cooperation is vital as species move across borders and into areas with limited prior management experience