

Traditional Line Fish Allocations Not Enough

By [FINSA reporter](#) 26 February 2024



Traditional line fish allocations continue to be a source of discontent with small-scale fishers who want the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to fulfil her promise of 50% to the sector. Meanwhile the opposition political party reports it has won access to the scoring sheets for the fishing rights allocation process (FRAP 2021).

Currently there is a petition doing the rounds with a view to compelling Minister Barbara Creecy to uphold her promise of ensuring that 50% of the traditional line fish resources are allocated to small-scale fishers.

The source of the petition are the civil rights groups, Masifundise Development Trust and Coastal Links, which believe small-scale fishers have been shortchanged. They say small-scale fishers should receive a fair and sufficient allocation of line fish resources to support their livelihoods and sustain their communities.

Economic viability of species allocated to basket

In November 2023, [the small-scale fishing rights allocation process was concluded in the Western Cape](#), marking the completion of the right allocation process for all four coastal provinces in South Africa, including the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal as outlined by the Small-scale Fisheries Policy.

With rights now granted across all provinces, there arises a significant concern among small-scale fishing cooperatives regarding the economic viability of the species allocated in their basket for sustainable livelihoods. Of particular concern is the allocation of Traditional Line Fish. Read the article: [Traditional Linefish Appeals Finalised](#)

The current allocation falls notably short of the commitments made by the Minister as well as her predecessor, Minister Zokwana, who pledged 50% of the nearshore traditional line fish allocation to small-scale fishers.

Concerns

The petition outlines the following concerns:

- Minister Creecy should fulfill her promise and ensure that 50% of the traditional line fish resources are allocated to small-scale fishers. They need to receive a fair and sufficient allocation of line fish resources to support their livelihoods and sustain their communities.
- Small-scale fishing communities must be included in the decision-making process about allocations in recognition of their traditional knowledge, expertise and experience. They also ask that the information is transparent about the criteria and process used to determine line fish allocations, and allows for public scrutiny and understanding.
- They would like support and development programmes and initiatives to improve capacity, skills, and the infrastructure of small-scale fishing communities to enable them to thrive in a competitive industry.

They ask that the Minister and her Department address the concerns promptly with a view to working towards a more inclusive and sustainable approach to line fish allocations.

DA wins access to scoring sheets

According to a statement issued by the Democratic Alliance (DA) MP, Dave Bryant last week, the DA applied in 2023 for the scoring sheets for the FRAP via a Promotion of Access to Information Application (PAIA) which has now been granted.

The reason it wanted the scoring sheets was because “many traditional fishing communities are concerned that they were given a raw deal during the application process.”

The DA confirms they “will be going through these sheets to identify inconsistencies and will make them available to anyone from the industry who requires access.”

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