

Too Big To Ignore Research Report

Number R-02/2016



**Implementing the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines:  
What's in it for Newfoundland and Labrador?**

Synergy Session

**Friday, April 22, 2016  
St. John's, Canada**

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RESEARCH

POLICY

MOBILIZATION

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4	<b>Executive summary</b>
5	<b>Introduction to the SSF Guidelines</b>
5	<b>A study on the opportunities and challenges of the SSF Guidelines on small-scale fisheries in Newfoundland Canada</b>
6	<b>Breakout exercise: Collective notes on value prioritization of the SSF Guidelines in Newfoundland and Labrador</b>
13	<b>Appendix I- Synergy session announcement</b>
14	<b>Appendix II- Appendix I- List of participants (in person)</b>
15	<b>Appendix III - Value prioritization of the SSF Guidelines (image)</b>
16	<b>Appendix IV - Value prioritization of the SSF Guidelines for each group</b>
17	<b>Appendix V – Value prioritization of the SSF Guidelines for each table or group</b>

## Executive Summary

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On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 the Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development and the Too Big To Ignore project hosted a synergy session '*Implementing the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines: What's in it for Newfoundland and Labrador?*'. The session, held at Memorial University, St. John's campus, offered an opportunity to discuss the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and how the province of Newfoundland and Labrador could benefit from their implementation. Thirty-two participants attended the synergy session in St. John's, and 23 joined via live webcast. The session was moderated by Rob Greenwood and Taylor Stocks from the Harris Centre.

In the first part of the synergy session, **Ratana Chuenpagdee** of the Too Big To Ignore project (TBTI, [www.toobigtoignore.net](http://www.toobigtoignore.net)), Department of Geography, Memorial University, introduced the SSF Guidelines. The SSF Guidelines represent a global consensus on principles and guidance for small-scale fisheries governance and development. Adopted in June 2014, the SSF Guidelines were developed through a collaborative process, with strong involvement from civil society organizations, facilitated by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

**Meike Brauer** and **Sarah Potter**, two visiting undergraduate students from Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands, presented the preliminary results of their study related to public awareness about the SSF Guidelines and potential for implementation. Through interview with key fisheries stakeholders, their findings reveal three key aspects considered highly relevant to Newfoundland and Labrador, i.e. a) public consultation and participation, b) economic, social and environmental sustainability, and c) social responsibility as the most important guiding principles for the implementation. Some of the identified challenges include low opportunities for engagement in decision-making as well and poor cooperation between federal and provincial governments.

In the second part of the synergy session, participants were divided into small groups and each group was asked to rank nine topics related to the SSF Guidelines in terms of their relevance and ease of implementation. The participants considered the majority of the topics to be highly relevant but hard to implement in Newfoundland and Labrador. In particular, high level of agreement was found regarding the importance of issues related to disaster and risk, as well as policy coherence, but the challenges in addressing them were well recognized.

## Synergy Session

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### 1. Introducing the SSF Guidelines

The SSF Guidelines are an instrument dedicated to small-scale fisheries sector, which is often overlooked and marginalized. The SSF Guidelines represent a multinational consensus on principles and guidance for the governance and development of small-scale fisheries. Their development came about with the aid of representatives from various small-scale fisheries stakeholders and organizations from around the world, particularly civil society organizations, through a process facilitated by FAO. The SSF Guidelines are intended to guide and encourage everyone associated with the sector to work together, to help promote secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries for the benefit of the fishers, their communities, and society as a whole.

The synergy session offered an opportunity to discuss the SSF Guidelines within the context of Newfoundland and Labrador. The description of the synergy session is shown in Appendix I. Thirty-two participants attended the synergy session in St. John's (see list in Appendix II), and 23 joined via live webcast. Dr. Rob Greenwood of the Harris Center facilitated the session, assisted by Taylor Stocks.

In the first part of the session, Ratana Chuenpagdee introduced the SSF Guidelines, discussing why they were developed and what they mean for the small-scale fisheries sector. She pointed out the significance of this sector, highlighting that the majority of the world's fisheries are small-scale and that 95% of the landings from these fisheries are used for local consumption. It is because of this importance, and the recognition of their marginalization in terms of geography, economics and political, that the SSF Guidelines were developed. The SSF Guidelines are found upon a human rights-based approach, intended to encourage equitable and sustainable social and economic development. Dr. Chuenpagdee went on to discuss the principles behind the SSF Guidelines such as accountability, transparency, and the aforementioned human rights. Overall, the roles of the SSF Guidelines are to place small-scale fisheries in the context of human rights, to set out principles and guidance for sustainable small-scale fisheries development, to empower small-scale fisheries communities in governance, and to put an emphasis on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. The successful implementation of the SSF Guidelines goes beyond fisheries, resulting, for instance, in sustainable livelihoods, social stability, food security, and sustainable social and economic development. The implementation also depends on active involvement of each stakeholder group. The presentation was concluded by highlighting some of the work that TBTI is doing under their research cluster '[SSF Guidelines](#)'.

### 2. A study on the opportunities and challenges of the SSF Guidelines on small-scale Fisheries in Newfoundland, Canada

Meike Brauer and Sarah Pötter gave the second presentation, 'A study on the opportunities and challenges of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries in Newfoundland, Canada'. Meike and Sarah studied at Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands. The goal of their study was to gauge awareness, interest, and suitability of the SSF Guidelines in the context of small-scale fisheries Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as determine the likelihood for the implementation. Their preliminary findings revealed that, according to 34 people they interviewed, including small-scale fishers, governments, researchers and environmental groups, the most important guiding principles stipulated in the SSF Guidelines were consultation and participation; economic, social and environmental sustainability; and social responsibility. The SSF Guidelines were considered applicable to address issues relating to recruitment, communication and participation, and the enhancement of economic viability. The recently elected Liberal government and the willingness of the stakeholders to work together were some of the main factors and conditions that were said to enable the implementation. Some of the identified challenges included a low level of opportunities for engagement in decision-making as well as the low level of cooperation between federal and provincial governments. As a way to move forward and to get around these obstacles, the following ingredients were suggested, i.e. multi-level stakeholder commitment to the SSF Guidelines, the development of a steering group, and the decentralization of the decision making process.

### **3. Breakout exercise: Value prioritization of the SSF Guidelines in Newfoundland and Labrador**

In the second part of the synergy session, the participants were divided into six groups and were asked to rank the SSF Guidelines based on their relevance and ease of implementation in the context of Newfoundland and Labrador's small-scale fisheries sector. This exercise allowed participants to place the SSF Guidelines into one of the following clusters:

- a) Relevant and easy to implement;
- b) Relevant and hard to implement;
- c) Not relevant but easy to implement; or
- d) Not relevant and hard to implement.

Each group was given nine cards, each representing a different topic covered in the SSF Guidelines. The task was to place each card on a grid (Appendix III). These nine topics were:

- Governance of tenure
- Sustainable resource management
- Social development and employment

- Value chains, post harvest, trade
- Gender equality
- Disaster risks and climate change
- Policy coherence and institutional collaboration
- Information, research, communication
- Capacity development

Notes taken during the group deliberation and presentation of their results to the plenary, along with the general discussion, as summarized below. Data from the exercises are shown in Appendices III, IV and V.

### 3.1 *Governance of Tenure*

Description:

- Safeguards livelihood, housing, social stability & economic, social and rural development
- Sustainable/responsible resource use of fish harvesters
- Making the resource user-responsible

This topic raises the question about who owns the resource. The current quota allocation structure is problematic since fish harvesters should have an access to a resource that is comparable with other provinces (e.g. Newfoundland and Labrador fish harvesters in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence should have the same access as Quebec fishermen). The topic is thus considered very important to implement, but the challenge in implementing it is also recognized.

Some participants were confused about what “sustainable/responsible resource use by fish harvesters” meant. Examples were given by other participants, which included a range of actions for fish harvesters such as avoiding “high-grading” catches, staying within total allowable catch, deterring from illegal fishing practices (e.g. using false hulls to hide fish caught beyond quota limits). This can also be interpreted as enabling and supporting responsible practices.

There are many on-going conflicts around fish allocations, shares, and access. This is further complicated by the fact that fish are not restricted by the same boundaries as the harvesters. Some participants believed that the biggest challenge is how to reconcile the differences between small-scale vs. industrial fishing. The recent *Last In, First Out* (LIFO) policy for shrimp was used as an example about tension between the two sectors and the opportunity to apply the principles under the ‘Governance of Tenure’ to help resolve it.

### 3.2 *Sustainable resource management*

Description:

- Long-term management plans
- Stakeholder collaboration
- Knowledge exchange is important

The group considered that sustainable resource management in the province is in progress and the long-term management plans are developing. This topic is not high on the priority list of action, not because it is not important or relevant but because at the province is already doing better than in the past.

What makes the progress of sustainable resource management so challenging is the process of stakeholder collaboration. Specifically, the term 'stakeholder' is insufficient and misleading: harvesters and processors are not the only stakeholders. More stakeholder groups, such as 'consumers' or 'general public' must be part of it too. Ultimately, everyone in society is a stakeholder.

Sustainable resource management cannot be achieved without first improving *Governance of Tenure* as well as promote *Policy coherence and institutional collaboration*. These two topics were considered preconditions for sustainable resource management.

Overall, participants felt that this is very important, but that there was already work in place to ensure resources are sustainably managed.

### 3.3 *Social development & employment*

Description:

- Education
- Increase everyday life to reasonable standards
- Increasing working conditions
  - Fair wages
  - Working hours
  - Safety

Some participants suggested that social development and employment should be treated as separate topics. They argued that *social development* is important although not as much as the topic of value chain. It is a quality-of-life question, which must be separated from employment, but is still very important to implement.

*Employment* is an important issue even though fisheries directly employ only around 2% of the population. This number is greater when adding the subsectors. Though this issue is important, it is not easy to implement since it is difficult to change the existing legislation. Many restrictions prevent people from entering the fishery such as the 'buddy up systems'. Despite the economic barriers, there is a desire for new people to join the fishery. Another challenge is that people feel that the fishery does not belong to them. Before 1992, 30% of the population was involved in the fishery but now it is down to 2%. Additionally, economic spin-off of the tourism sector is huge, and there are some conflicts regarding the overall importance of employment.

The seasonal nature of small-scale fisheries makes it difficult for harvesters to make a viable living from the fishery. Traditionally, small-scale fisheries harvesters would supplement their livelihood with other activities (e.g. forestry), and today many work outside of the province in the off-season. It is questionable how long these opportunities will be available, particularly with the downturn in the oil and gas industry. Many potential young entrants into the fishery do not see it as a viable income due to the seasonality of the industry, low compensation and quotas for the inshore sector.

Overall, participants found that this topic would be easy to implement since, for the most part, many things are already in place to support it.

### **3.4 Value Chains, Post-Harvest, Trade**

Description:

- Improve fish quality and waste management
- Increase access to markets
- Fair distribution of profit

Many participants strongly believed that the implementation of this topic in the SSF Guidelines is very important in order to achieve a valuable inshore fishery. Some believed that it was a top priority, but that it will be very difficult to implement due to a large number of stakeholders involved. Others discussed the fact that more effort must be put towards changing the methods and types of fishing gears as a way to increase the quality of the catch. It was noted that the Fish Food & Allied Workers Union (FFAW; also referred to by the new name - FFAW/Unifor), Newfoundland and Labrador's union for fisheries workers, has already put things in place to change this situation.

Fish harvesters need to get a better value for their product. For this to happen, the quality of harvested fish needs to increase. For cod, this means no use of gillnets and no harvest during the warmer summer months to avoid spoiling. There seems to be high recognition among all stakeholders that this needs to happen, but there is

disconnect between harvesters and processors (e.g. lack of awareness on potential return for high quality fish, and what high quality fish is).

### 3.5 *Gender equality*

Description:

- Gender mainstreaming
- Challenge discrimination by adopting or creating legislation and policies for gender equality
- Enhance female involvement in decision-making processes

This topic was regarded as very important, but there was a great divergence in participants' opinions on how difficult it would be to implement it. Some felt that implementation would be difficult since women are often less represented in fisheries and even when they are, they usually work in the fish plants. Others felt that it was less of an issue in Newfoundland and Labrador and that things have improved with women making up about 15% of harvesters and 80% of processors.

On a whole, it was agreed that there should be better recognition of the role of women in the small-scale fisheries workforce. In addition, not enough attention is placed on how the sector could be more inclusive. Some participants thought there is a general sentiment of the fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador as being male dominated, and that any recruitment efforts are primarily targeting men. "The by's are out in the shed playing darts and the women are having their own conversations. It's not a matter of them saying a woman can't go out on the boat and fish, it's the overarching attitude."

It was noted that women are heavily engaged in fish processing, and that the fish processing workers may not have a strong voice in fisheries governance. At the same time, it was also mentioned that there are women engaged in the fishery, and that their work conditions and rights are the same as those of men.

Those participants, who urged for greater attention on gender equality issues, thought that this could be done through capacity development and policy coherence.

### 3.6 *Disaster risks & climate change*

Description:

- SSF is very vulnerable to climate and disasters
- Legislation and policies towards mitigation and fighting climate change
- Precautionary approach

This is a difficult topic to assess because of the unpredictable nature of these events. Many agreed that this is extremely relevant and important for society, especially the fishery, but it is very hard to take action on it. For example, climate change is already having extensive effects, which are difficult to fully understand (e.g. shrimp decline is potentially made worse by climate change).

Some proposed that the precautionary approach may be more relevant to *Sustainable resource management*, but the group was split on this since the terminology is often used in a fisheries context.

Not much can be done about the fossil fuel use legislation since there's no secondary processing producing carbon emissions. This is an important topic but hard to implement from Newfoundland and Labrador's perspective. It comes back to the high degree of uncertainty around climate change impacts.

### **3.7 Policy coherence & Institutional collaboration**

Description:

- Uniform legislation referring to national and international legislation
- Collaboration between different fishing organizations and associations
- New tools: marine spatial planning and coastal zone management
- Cooperation with neighbour states in order to generate a broader range of sustainability

There were different perspectives on this topic. The overall view was that the divergence of opinion on coherence and collaboration makes it challenging to implement but still of high importance and relevance. In addition, this topic was seen as providing policy framework for *Sustainable resource management*.

It is hard to develop a policy that reaches all parties. Some participants expressed that the fishery is dominated by large-scale, industrial fishing operations and that the federal government, Department Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), tends to favour this kind of fishing.

Different levels of complexity make it hard for DFO and the provincial government, Department of Fisheries, and Aquaculture (DFA)<sup>1</sup> to collaborate. At the same time, there is also a general perception that institutional collaboration is worse than it actually is. A lot of collaboration is currently happening. DFO and DFA work closely together, and also in close collaboration with the FFAW. There are local fisheries committees, groups and area representatives who meet every year with DFO and DFA. They are also given opportunities to voice concerns and share ideas at meetings taking place to discuss fisheries management and quotas by species.

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<sup>1</sup> As of August 17, 2016, the department is part of the new Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agrifoods.

During confederation, the self-governance fisheries system at the provincial level was taken away, with the abolishment of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board. Negotiation about quota allocation is often contentious. Some participants noted that this was due, in part, to the fact that FFAW represents both inshore and offshore harvesters. An example was given with the shrimp fishery on the Northern Peninsula.

### **3.8 Information, research, & communication**

Description:

- Knowledge exchange between all levels
- Communication between all stakeholders is essential

Some participants considered this topic to be very relevant, and since the province is doing well in this topic, it is also easy to implement. Further, participants recognized the role of research community in generating information and communicating the knowledge. Others found that while sharing information is easy, seeing it implemented is not.

Communication is currently happening but it is less focused on small-scale fisheries. Some participants thought that Memorial University could play a larger role in implementing this aspect of the SSF Guidelines.

### **3.9 Capacity development**

Description:

- Provide adequate education, workshops, programs as well as organizations and institutions.

Capacity development was found to be easy to implement because there are already many existing capacities. However, the use of these capacities is low. Participants also considered this topic easy to implement since it is easy to organize activities to promote this, such as workshops and training programs.

There are institutions in place that are currently working on this, and there is a broad recognition on the importance of capacity development. Participants also mentioned that the current focus may be more towards the larger boats than small boats, and that more work could be done on capacity development for small-scale fisheries.

Participants were also of the opinion that it is possible to get started on capacity development before solving the more systemic challenges such as 'Governance of tenure', 'Sustainable resource management', and 'Policy coherence and institutional collaboration'.

## Appendix I – Synergy session announcement

### Implementing the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines: What's in it for Newfoundland and Labrador?

Friday, April 22, 2016, 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

**McCann Centre (ED 2030B), St. John's Campus of Memorial University**

Attend in person or by webinar! Free admission, parking, and light lunch

The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) is the first international instrument dedicated entirely to the immensely important – but often neglected – small-scale fisheries sector. In this province, the guidelines are aimed at the inshore fishery and address such issues as social development and employment, value chains, ethical sourcing, waste reduction, gender equality, disaster risk and climate change, among many others.

The SSF Guidelines represent a global consensus on principles and guidance for the governance and development of small-scale fisheries. They were developed in close collaboration with representatives of small-scale fisheries organizations in a process facilitated by the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization. They are directed at all those involved in the sector and intend to guide and encourage governments, fishing communities and other stakeholders to work together and ensure secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries for the benefit of fishers, fish workers and their communities, as well as for society at large.

This session will look at the challenges and opportunities, as well as the risks and benefits, of implementing the SSF Guidelines in Newfoundland and Labrador. Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the guidelines and to offer their comments to TBTI team members who are working on the SSF Guidelines implementation.

The session will be of interest to inshore fishers, fish processors, fishery regulators, purchasers, the foodservice/tourism industry, fair trade and environmental NGOs, community leaders and others interested in the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Presenters:

Dr. Ratana Chuenpagdee; TBTI project director and Canada Research Chair in Natural Resource Sustainability and Community Development.

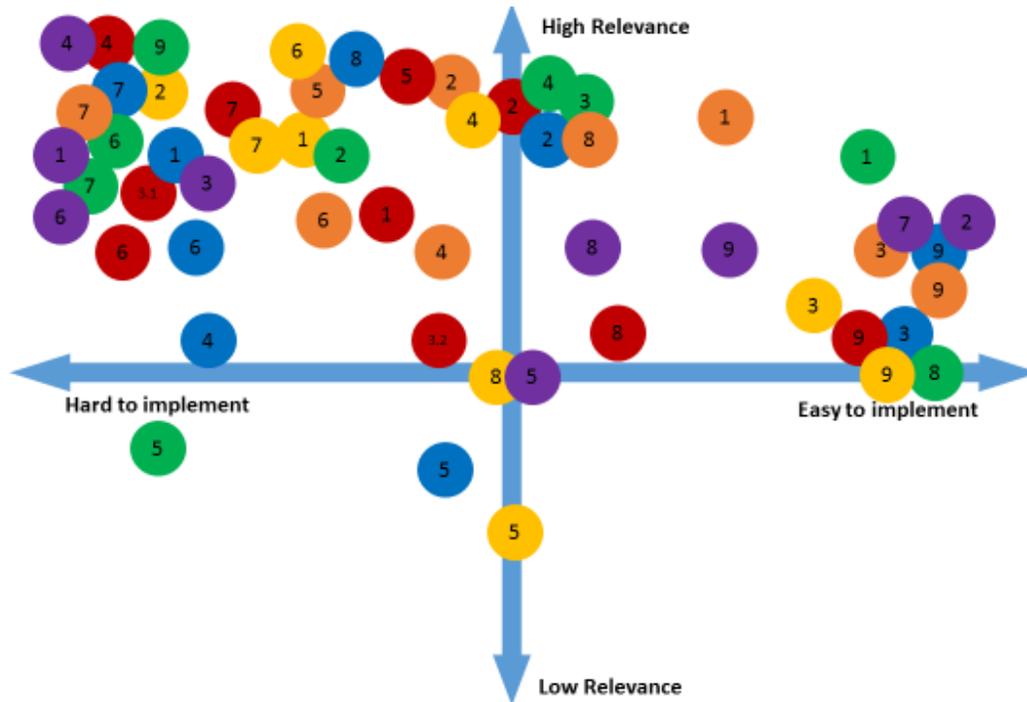
Meike Brauer and Sarah Pötter; visiting undergraduate students at Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences (VHL) in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, working with TBTI to conduct research in NL about the SSF Guidelines.

## Appendix II – List of participants (in-person)

	Name	Affiliation
1	Mel Agapito	MUN
2	David Bishop	MUN
3	Richard Boczkowski	
4	Nancy Brace	RANL
5	Meike Brauer	MUN
6	Ratana Chuenpagdee	MUN
7	Leslie J. Dean	Public at large
8	Winston Fiander	
9	Roy Gibbons	MI
10	Rob Greenwood	MUN
11	Ella Heneghan	Tourism
12	Johan Joensen	FFAW
13	Sharon Keough- Boczkowski	
14	Sigrid Kuehnemund	WWF
15	Jason Leong	Centre for Social Enterprise
16	Brennan Lowery	MUN
17	Joseph Luomba	MUN
18	Antonio Martin	MUN
19	Stephanie Nicholl	WWF
20	Agnes Noseworthy	
21	Eric Noseworthy	
22	Kimberly Orren	Fishing for Success
23	Fred Phelan	MUN/MI/DFO
24	Sarah Potter	MUN
25	Olivier Randin	MUN
26	Robert Rangeley	Ocean Canada
27	Delphine Rocklin	MUN
28	Anne St. Croix	Independent – culture/tourism
29	Wichin Suebpala	Ramkhamhaeng University
30	Jason Waters	MUN
31	Helen Woodrow	
32	Yin Yolanda	MUN

## Appendix III

Value prioritization of the SSF Guidelines (numbered 1-9) for each table or group, separated by colour

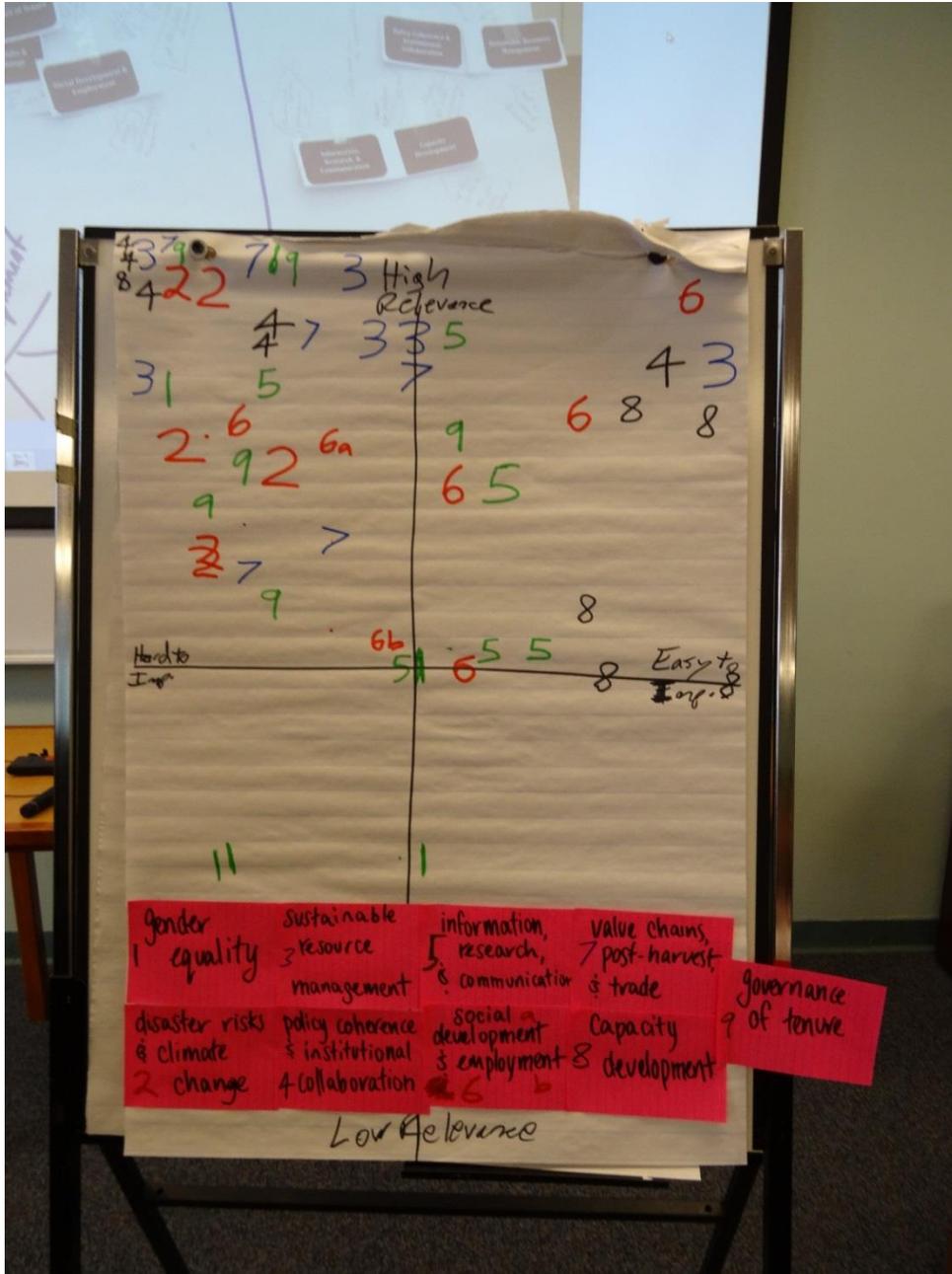


1. Governance of tenure
2. Sustainable resource management
3. Social development & employment
4. Value chains, post-harvest, trade
5. Gender equality
6. Disaster risk & climate change
7. Policy coherence & Institutional collaboration
8. Information, research, & communication
9. Capacity development



## Appendix IV

Value prioritization of the SSF Guidelines (numbered 1-9) for each table or group, separated by colour



\*Note: Numbering of the SSF guidelines shown in the photo above differs from those used in text. SSF Guidelines above are numbered as follows: 1. Gender equality 2. Disaster risk & climate change 3. Sustainable resource management 4. Policy coherence & institutional collaboration 5. Information research & communication 6. Social development & employment 7. Value chains, post-harvest, & trade 8. Capacity development 9. Governance of tenure.

## Appendix V

Value prioritization of the SSF Guidelines for each table or group.

### **Gender equality**

Table 1 – High relevance and hard to implement

Table 2 – Low priority and hard to implement

Table 3 – Low priority and hard to implement

Table 4 – Low relevance and medium-hard to implement

Table 5 – High relevance hard to implement

Grenfell – Middle of both (relevance and implementation)

### **Disaster Risk & Climate Change**

T1 – High relevance and hard to implement

T2 – High relevance and hard to implement

T3 – Higher relevance and hard to implement

T4 – High relevance and hard to implement

T5 – High relevance and hard to implement

Grenfell – Relevant and hard to implement

### **Sustainable Resource Management**

T1 – High relevance and medium-hard to implement

T2 – High relevance and medium-hard to implement

T3 – High relevance and hard to implement

T4 – Very high relevance and very hard implementation

T5 – Very high relevance and hard to implement

Grenfell – High relevance and easy to implement

### **Policy Coherence & Institutional Collaboration**

T1 – High relevance and hard to implement

T2 – High relevance and hard to implement

T3 – High relevance and hard to implement

T4 – Most relevant and hardest to implement

T5 – Most relevant and hardest to implement

Grenfell – High relevance and easy to implement

## **Information, Research, & Communication**

- T1 – Relevant and easy to implement
- T2 – Highly relevant and somewhat hard to implement
- T3 – Somewhat relevant and easy to implement
- T4 – Middle of both (relevance and implementation)
- T5 – Highly relevant and somewhat easy to implement
- Grenfell – Relevant and somewhat easy to implement

## **Social Development & Employment**

- T1 – (**Split**) High relevance and Hard to implement for social development and Relevant and Hard to implement for employment
- T2 – Somewhat relevant and very easy to implement
- T3 – Highly relevant and somewhat easy to implement
- T4 - Relevant and easy to implement
- T5 – Very relevant and very easy to implement
- Grenfell – Relevance and somewhat hard to implement

## **Value chains, post harvest, trade**

- T1 – Very relevant and very hard to implement
- T2 – Highly relevant and hard to implement
- T3 – Highly relevant and hard to implement
- T4 – Highly relevant and somewhat hard to implement
- T5 – Relevant and somewhat hard to implement
- Grenfell - Very relevant and very hard to implement

## **Capacity development**

- T1 – Relevant and easy to implement
- T2 – Relevant and easy to implement
- T3 – Very relevant and very hard to implement
- T4 – Medium relevance and very easy to implement
- T5 – Medium relevance and very easy to implement
- Grenfell – Relevant and easy to implement

## **Governance of tenure**

- T1 – Relevant and hard to implement
- T2 – Relevant and hard to implement
- T3 – Relevant and easy to implement
- T4 – Very high relevance and very hard to implement
- T5 – Somewhat relevant and somewhat hard to implement
- Grenfell – Highly relevant and very hard to implement

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