

Title: **Series of Institutional and Legal Reforms in the Fishery Sector Facing General Governance Crisis, A Malagasy Example**

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Abstract: Since the seventies, the Malagasy fishery sector management has been oriented by three paradigms: development, rationalization (looking for economic efficiency) and attempts of sustainable development (to reconcile economic, social and conservation goals). The institutional and legal frame of the marine sector has been characterized by many transformations linked to the political history (post colonial State, socialist period, economic liberalization...), the peculiar role of foreign assistance institutions and bilateral foreign relationships, the relations between State and private sector, the beginnings of a political decentralization process, the growing importance on conservation NGOs and a lasting general governance crisis. The fishery sector, which has been for a long time presented as a dynamic one, mainly in terms of foreign currency earnings, is facing many challenges and difficulties since the middle of the nineties. These difficulties are linked to a complex set of factors: dependence from foreign markets, great poverty in the rural and traditional fishery sector, non competitive behavior of industrial sector. Such difficulties have led the fishery sector to a very critical situation. The collapse of this system of management or of no management is possible. In this contribution, after a rapid description of the past dynamics of two representative components of the sector (the shrimp fishery and the traditional canoe fishery of the Toliara region), we shall discuss the evolution of the management system, with a particular emphasis on institutional transformation and legal frame reforms. The growing importance of the ecological conservation paradigm will be also examined from different angles. To which extent has it contributed to the new orientation of the fishery policy? What are the apparent and real stake holders adherence to more conservative policy orientations? We finally shall discuss the limits of fishery sector policy in a context of general governance crisis and lasting rural poverty for whom few and parsimonious solutions are envisaged.