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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Co-Management Regional Stakeholder Engagement Report



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Cover photo: A picture of Dr. Raymond Babanawo (Chief of Party, SFMP) delivering a copy of the co-management policy and Area plans to the Mr. Michael Arthur Dadzie, (Executive Director, FC)

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ACRONYMS

CBFMC	Community-Based Fisheries Management Committees
CIC	Canoe Identification Card
DAA	Development Action Association
FC	Fisheries Commission
FoN	Friends of the Nation
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen’s Council
HM	Hen Mpoano
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
MMDs	Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Development Program

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BACKGROUND

Development of Co-Management Policy for the Fisheries Sector in Ghana

Ghana desires to embrace a fisheries co-management regime and this has been expressed in many government policy and management documents including the West Africa Regional Fisheries Project (WARFP). However, the path to implementation of a successful co-management arrangement has not been clearly articulated in any of these documents.

With the support of the World Bank under the Fisheries Subsector Capacity Building Project between 1997 and 2002, the Fisheries Commission implemented Community-Based Fisheries Management Committees (CBFMC) arrangements (a form of Fisheries Co-management) at many fish landing locations along the coast and inland fish landing sites along the Volta Lake. The Committees were chaired by Chief Fishermen or Headmen (in the case of the Volta Lake Committees). The CBFMCs collapsed within a short period as the arrangement lacked the necessary guidance, resources and clarity of responsibilities. A good number of lessons were learned from this experimentation which has guided the development of the new co-management policy for Ghana.

The development of this new co-management policy has journeyed through a couple of years with consultations involving several stakeholder across the country. These consultations have been supported by the World Bank, USAID, MoFAD/FC and NGOs. The approach of the new fisheries co-management policy is to devolve some fisheries management authority from the central fisheries management authority, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) and the Fisheries Commission (FC) to stakeholders especially resource users through collaborative management arrangements. This approach is globally viewed as an acceptable best practice for fisheries governance where fishers and other resource users are empowered as active members in the resources management team balancing rights and responsibilities and working in partnership with government.

Co-management takes many forms from very little power sharing where government generally consults with resource users on proposed rules, to systems where management decisions regarding the utilization of the resources (how to fish and how much fish to harvest) are made primarily by user groups. The advantages of co-management over other forms of fisheries management include the following;

- Resource users have practical day-to-day local knowledge of the fishery and can propose practical ways in which the resource can be managed based on their unique ecological understanding of the fishery.
- If resource users are developing the regulations, then the regulations will be viewed as more legitimate rather than being imposed, leading to high compliance with the rules
- Co-management provides opportunities for management styles that are precautionary, adaptive and flexible.

REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS ON THE FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT POLICY

As part of the implementation arrangements of the Co-Management Policy the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and the Fisheries Commission jointly held series of regional stakeholder engagements across the four coastal regions of Ghana with the support of USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project. About 150 participants made up of fisheries officers from the MOFAD/FC, officials from Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs), traditional rulers, chief fishermen, canoe owners, and fish processors, representatives of the various fisheries associations including National Fisheries

Association of Ghana (NAFAG) and the Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association (GITA) were engaged in discussions on how to sustain Ghana’s fisheries resources through adoption of the National Fisheries Co-Management Policy.

The purpose of the stakeholder engagement was to share the content of the National Fisheries Co-Management Policy and discuss the implementation arrangements with all key stakeholders. The regional engagements were held per the schedules presented in Table 1 below. During the first stakeholder meeting, the SFMP presented 1,500 copies of the policy and 100 copies each of the Community Based Fisheries Management Plans to the Executive Director of the FC for subsequent distribution to stakeholders as depicted in Figure 1 below.

Table 1 Schedule of Regional Stakeholder Engagements on the Fisheries Co-Management Policy

S/N	Region	Location	Date	Remarks
1	Greater Accra	Accra – East Legon/Mensvic Hotel	February 09, 2021	COVID-19 protocols were strictly observed
2	Western	Takoradi – Akroma Plaza	February 24,2021	COVID-19 protocols were strictly observed
3	Central	Elmina – Elmina Beach Resort	February 25,2021	COVID-19 protocols were strictly observed
4	Volta	Keta – Villa Amore	March 02, 2021	COVID-19 protocols were strictly observed



Figure 1 A picture of Dr. Raymond Babanawo (Chief of Party, SFMP) handing over copies of the co-management policy and area plans to Mr. Michael Arthur Dadzie, (Executive Director, FC)

The MOFAD/FC also used the opportunity to engage fishers, especially officials of the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) on the implementation of the CIC system. The GNCFC has log in access into the CIC system. While this arrangement contributes to transparency in fisheries management and promotes sustainable management, it also imposes some responsibilities on the GNCFC and highlights the collaboration and participation of resource users in management as provided for in the Co-Management Policy

Presentation on the Fisheries Co-Management Policy

The presentation of the policy document was led by Mr. Kofi Agbogah who served as the focal person for SFMP in the development of the policy and has been involved in all stakeholder engagements that provided inputs for the development of the policy. (Figure 2).

Key Issues:

- Power to manage and decision making is shared between government and stakeholders in the fisheries.
- Enhanced participation of resource users in management decision making.
- Co-management is a new approach to fisheries management which involves delegation of some management decision making to resource users.
- Resource users have day-to-day local knowledge of the fishery and can propose practical ways to management.
- It provides opportunities for management that are precautionary, adaptive and flexible.
- The policy to be implemented by Fisheries Commission with the active involvement of relevant stakeholders in plan development.
- The Policy to be reviewed in two-years.
- Key stakeholders must be committed to provide financial support to plan implementation.
- Management units consists of small scale fisheries unit and large scale fisheries unit.



Figure 2 A picture of Mr. Kofi Agbogah, sharing the content of the Fisheries Co-Management Policy with stakeholders.

Discussion and contribution by stakeholders

- A workable co-management will need an amendment of the fisheries act to support the policy.
- FC should make available more copies of the policy to all coastal MMDAs.
- Premix could provide source to support implementation of the co-management policy.
- Contributions from Fisheries Associations and MMDAs could be used to fund the policy.
- Traditional authorities must be actively involved in the establishment of co-management committees.
- Fishers should assist enforcement through voluntary compliance in rebuilding the stocks.
- Representatives of Fisher Associations should disseminate the knowledge acquired in fisheries training programs to their constituents.
- Co-Management Committees should be established based on need and demand.

Summary of Key Recommendations:

MOFAD/FC should work in close coordination the coastal MMDA's in the implementation of fisheries co-management policy and related activities.

Fishers and community leaders must be actively involved in the campaign against all forms of IUU practices.

Meetings with fishers should be held at landing beaches where fishers gather to discuss issues related to fisheries management to clear the assumption of fisher leaders being compromised in decision making.

FC should establish additional Co-Management Units following the examples and experiences gained in the development of the Community Based Fisheries Management Plans for Pra, Ankobra and Densu estuaries.

Presentation on the Canoe Identification Cards

The presentation on the functional elements of the Canoe Identification Card was led by Rebecca Sackey-Mensah from the Marine Fisheries Management Division of the FC. The FC official has been the focal person for SFMP with respect to the development of the Canoe Identification Card. (Figure 3)

Key Issues:

- Registration of canoes is a legal requirement under the Fisheries Act, 2002, Act 624.
- CIC was launched in December, 2019.
- The outbreak of COVID-19 delayed the role out of in CIC 2020 as planned.
- A total of 10,138 canoe cards have been printed and ready to be distributed to canoe owners in the various coastal districts.
- Remaining cards have not been printed due to lack of data on canoes, therefore, FC requires information on all canoes to facilitate printing of remaining CICs.
- All CICs have enhanced security features (QR Code).
- Registration of canoes ongoing along the various landing beaches to update the Canoe Registry.
- Effective discussions ongoing with GNCFC with regards to the moratorium on new entrants of canoes.



Figure 3 A picture of Rebecca Sackey-Mensah, FC Officer, making a presentation on CIC at the Central Region Stakeholder Engagement Meeting in Elmina

Discussion and contribution by stakeholders

- MOFAD/FC should continue to engage GNCFC in relation to the moratorium on new entrants of canoes.
- District assemblies pledged to assist and encourage fishers to register their canoes and acquire CIC.
- Newly created regions and districts should be added to the CIC system.
- Participants are informed about the role of CIC in moving the marine artisanal fisheries sector from open access to regulated access.
- FC with the support of GNCFC will delete duplicate canoes from the canoe register to reflect the exact number of canoe fleets in the country.

Summary of Key Recommendations:

The concept of the Canoe Identification Card (CIC) is to provide the mechanism and framework to transition the open access regime to the fisheries resources in Ghana to a regulated access regime through identification, registration and embossment of all fishing vessels within the artisanal fisheries sector in Ghana and consequently address overcapacity and fishing effort challenges associated with the sector.

The distribution of CIC should be undertaken simultaneously with dissemination of information on moratorium on new entrants into the marine canoe sector as part of plans to address overcapacity within the sector.

Summary Remarks by Michael Arthur Dadzie, the Executive Director, Fisheries Commission

The Executive Director of the Fisheries Commission participated in all four regional engagements on the Co-Management Policy and made submissions and issues related to the policy and challenges within the sector. The summary of the submissions made include the following:

- He expressed his gratitude to USAID/SFMP for spearheading the development of the Co-Management policy for the fisheries sector.
- Urged stakeholders to appreciate natural resources and the marine environment hence the need to protect, conserve and exploit them in a sustainably.
- The policy prescriptions and directives were made through a multi-stakeholder approach.
- A workable and effective co-management will need a collaborative effort between MOFAD/FC and opinion leaders such as chief fishermen, fish processors, traditional authorities, MMDAs, NGOs etc.
- Encouraged stakeholders to own and drive the implementation of the policy to ensure sustainability of our marine resources for future generation.

Summary Remarks by Dr. Raymond Babanawo - Chief of Party, SFMP

The SFMP CoP also participated in all four regional engagements and his submissions are summarized as follows:

- The USAID/Sustainable Fisheries Management Project which commenced in 2014 comes to an end in April, 2021.
- The project has implemented many activities with support and collaboration from MOFAD/FC, implementing partners (Hen Mpoano, FON, DAA and CEWEFIA), Fisher groups (NAFAG, GNCFC, NAFPTA, GIFA and GITA) and expressed gratitude to all institutions.
- SFMP facilitated the development of the National Co-Management Policy for the Fisheries sector and the three Community Based Area Management Plans.
- Other key SFMP's achievements were also mentioned.
- Informed participants about the anticipated Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity (GFRA) and its components
- Stakeholders were urged to demonstrate commitment to full implementation of the co-management policy and activities and programs initiated by the SFMP.

CONCLUSION

The stakeholder engagement on the Fisheries Co-Management Policy represented a very important step in the implementation of the policy and the highlight was the active participation of all MMDAs in the regional meetings and their commitment to playing active roles as stipulated in the policy document.