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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Report on Bimonthly Follow Up Meeting With Association Members on Post Harvest Value Chain Improvement and Ahotor Oven



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Cover photo: Cross section of participants at the meeting at Anlo Beach. A participant, Beauty Agbenyegah making contribution (CEWEFIA)

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Resonance Global: <https://resonanceglobal.com/>
SNV: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/ghana>

ACRONYMS

CCM	Centre for Coastal Management
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CRC	Coastal Resource Center
CSLP	Coastal Sustainable Landscape Project
DAA	Development Action Association
DFAS	Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Science
DMFS	Department of Marine Fisheries Sciences
DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
FtF	Feed the Future
GIFA	Ghana Inshore Fishermen's Association
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
HM	Hen Mpoano
ICFG	Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance
MESTI	Ministry of Environment Science and Technology
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SSG	SSG Advisors
STWG	Scientific and Technical Working Group
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Development Program

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USAID/Ghana/SFMP for their technical and financial support over the years toward revamping Ghana marine fisheries sector and the association members for availing themselves for the meeting.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To stay abreast with the progress being made on their post-harvest activities, the CEWEFIA field team hold meetings with their members in the communities every other month. 3 of such meetings were held in Elmina, Moree and Anlo-Beach from 12th December, 18th December and 20th December 2018 respectively. A total of 243 participants attended the meetings.

These meetings are aimed at ascertaining the rate of application of the skills gained from the Post-harvest and Ahotor oven education and trainings. The meeting also provided a platform for members to share ideas, experiences and challenges. Other issues of relevance including USAID/Ghana/SFMP close out, formation of Village savings and Loan Association, Membership meetings and payment of membership dues were discussed.

The members expressed their appreciation for all the post- harvest trainings received and how it has helped improve their fishing business. They are however faced with several challenges that prohibit them from adopting the knowledge. The participants were encouraged to apply all the knowledge and experiences gained no matter how small even in the face of the challenges and be determined to improve their fishing.

The facilitator(s) applauded the participants for responding to the meeting.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Follow- Up Meetings are held every other month provide the program team with the opportunity to meet the large number of association members in their communities and monitor (by observation and through questioning) and determine whether the members are applying the knowledge and skills gained from the trainings given to them so far, the challenges they face in the course of their fishing business as well as the experiences gained.

At these meetings, members are given enough time to share their views, raise and discuss issues of importance and suggest a way forward to improve the delivery of the project's interventions.

Three of such follow up meetings was held among the association members at the project communities; Elmina, Moree and Anlo-Beach. The meeting took place from 12th, 18th and 20th December, 2018 at Moree, Elmina and Anlo Beach respectively.

The meetings were facilitated by the CEWEFIA Program Team; Mr. Nicholas Smith, Miss Josephine O Addo, and Miss Rose Affel.

Attendance

A total of two hundred and forty-three (243) members took part in the meeting which comprises of 81 from Moree, 84, Elmina and 78 from Anlo-Beach.

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Monitor level of impact and experience gained from post -harvest trainings among association members.
- Share experiences
- Ascertain challenges faced by association members in their fishing business
- Discuss other matters of concern

2.2 Expected Outcomes

Expected outcomes of the event included:

- Experiences gained and shared
- Level of compliance determined
- Challenges ascertained and solutions or recommendations suggested to address the challenges mentioned



Figure 1. Cross- Section of participants at the meeting at Moree with Mr. Nicholas Smith (standing in front).

3.0 MEETING PROCEDURES

3.1 Opening

The meeting was opened with the facilitator welcoming the members into the meeting which was followed by highlighting the purpose for the meeting. The facilitator went further to encourage the participants to feel free to express themselves when called upon to share their views.

3.2 Open Forum

A floor was opened for open discussion by all members.

3.3 Ahotor Oven:

The members were once again sensitized on the need to own and use Ahotor oven for their fish processing (smoking) business. This was to buttress their interest for the oven. Some of the participants expresses their desire to own an Ahotor oven but are faced with financial difficulties and land tenure issues. Others too have the view that they need loans to boost their business for more profit and that way they will be able to buy the oven. While others think that the government should support the fish processors to buy the Ahotor oven. The discussion brought to a note that personal savings were encouraged among members to help build the oven. Hence the need to for them to join a Village Savings and loan group.

3.4 Hygienic Fish Handling

Fish is food and also a perishable commodity that must be handled under strict hygienic conditions. Unfortunately, most fish processors do not observe any hygienic practices. They were admonished on the need to observe hygiene during processing of fish to ensure the marketing and sale of healthy fish to consumers.

3.5 Business Management Practices

The adoption of business management practices such as record keeping, calculating profit, opening business account and others was discussed. The participants were reminded to continue practicing the lessons learned from the business management training in their fishing business. They learnt that record keeping, opening business account are part of the hallmark of a successful business man.

3.6 Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)

The issue of village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) was also highlighted. Three groups have already been formed in Moree and more groups are expected to be formed in addition to the 3 already formed. There is currently no VSLA in Elmina, the members located there were encouraged to form one.

The program team shared the success of the Moree VSLA groups with the members. Participants at Teterimu, a suburb of Elmina, indicated that they will call the team to support them set up VSLA.

3.7 Close Out of USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP)

The members were once again informed about the closed out of USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project on the 31st March, 2019. The admonished the members that the SFMP project came to support them to improve their fishing business, and now that it is coming to an end, it does not mean that the training skills, knowledge and experiences have also ended. It is therefore important that, the processors understand and apply all the knowledge gained on the use and maintenance of the Ahotor Oven, hygienic fish handling and processing, to enable them, improve the fishing sector. That is when the project's objectives will have been achieved.

3.8 Experiences Shared

Some of the members also shared their experiences on the trainings they had received, especially on the hygienic fish handling and the business development training. One member, Madam Grace Ahor, a fish processor from Elmina, sharing her experience said, "The trainings that CEWEFIA through the support of USAID/Ghana/ SFMP has been given to us as fisher folks are to be embraced and applied since they are all meant to improve our work". She again encouraged her colleague fish processors to register their business, open bank account and form cooperative groups and by so doing they will be able to access the loan they are seeking for. To buttress her view, she further shared with them insights from a video documentary on some practices of fish processors in India that she learned at a workshop she attended. According to her, the fish processors have formed small groups and give small loans among themselves out of the group savings they make. They also have individual account and are applying the hygienic education given to them. This is worth emulating. The participants appreciated USAID/SFMP and CEWEFIA for their continuous education and training toward revamping the fishing business especially the fish processing.

Majority of the members indicated their need for soft loans to boost their businesses, and that if CEWEFIA and its donor USAID can support them as such.



Figure 2. Participants at awareness creation at Anlo-Beach. Madam Beauty Agbenyegah (first from right standing) making a contribution.

4.0 OUTCOME

It was realized that some of the members with listed few among them, Madam Grace Ahor, Peace Abla Gavor and Adjoa Mansa have committed to use the education given through USAID/SFMP and are willing to improve upon their way of handling their fish business in their own small way. The facilitator(s) indicated that the world is advancing both in knowledge and technology and that fish processors must also move on from their traditional ways of handling their businesses and accept the new technologies and educations given. The participants were entreated to ensure that their fishing business is geared towards profit making.

5.0 CHALLENGES

1. Financial constrains has prevented majority of the processors from purchasing the Ahotor oven. The financial difficulties is also influencing the fish processors to purchase bad and small size fish even though they know the negative implication of the action on the fisheries stock.
2. The members demanded for loans however, they are not however willing to meet the criteria for obtaining the loan, such as opening business account, keeping record of business transaction etc.
3. Some of the members are not willing to apply the experiences from the hygienic fish handling education, limiting the success of the intervention. They are of the motive that their fishing business will thrive with or without SFMP.
4. Despite several trainings and demonstrations, some members still have the notion that the Chorkor oven smokes faster than the Ahotor oven.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The participants recommended to CEWEFIA to help them seek loan from USAID/GHANA/SFMP to boost their business.

2. They also recommended that the government of Ghana should support the fish processors to purchase the improved oven (Ahotor Oven).

7.0 LESSONS LEARNED

1. Meeting the members in their communities enhance more participation and contribution.
2. The open forum enhanced the free expression of ideas while it also gave the project team the opportunity to ascertain the challenges of members the members of the association.



Figure 3. Cross section of participants at the meeting, Elmina

Table 1. Participation of members at the meeting

S/N	Communities	Sex		Total
		Men	Women	
1	Moree	5	76	81
2	Elmina	2	82	84
3	Anlo- Beach	10	68	78
Total				
		17	226	243

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The participants were entreated to cultivate good customer relation, loyal to their clients, transparent in their dealings and be trustworthy. It is expected that all the information shared

will be taken into consideration to ensure smooth business operations. Lastly the facilitators appreciated the participants for their massive participation.

The members were urged to be committed to the association by making regular payment of their membership dues and attend weekly meetings.

9.0 WAY FORWARD

- 1.** Make a follow-up on Participants at Teterimu, a suburb of Elmina for the formation of VSLA groups
- 2.** Continue monitoring the progress of Activities of Association members
- 3.** Continuous campaign and sensitization on Ahotor Oven

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOS



Figure 4. Moree participants at the meeting