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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

FWG Workshops on NFMP and Co- Management Implementation



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THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
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Friends of the Nation

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Cover photo: A section of participants at the Volta Regional Fisheries Stakeholder Workshop on NFMP Implementation and Draft Co-Management Policy (Photo credit: Eric Mawuko Atsiatorme, FoN)

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ACRONYMS

CBFMCs	Community-Based Fisheries Management Committees
CF	Chief Fishermen
FEU	Fisheries Enforcement Unit
FC	Fisheries Commission
FoN	Friends of the Nation
GITA	Ghana Inshore Trawlers Association
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
GTA	Ghana Tuna Association
IEZ	Inshore Exclusive Zone
MoFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Traders Association
NFMP	National Fisheries Management Plan
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD) developed a five-year National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP) which is expected to last from 2015 to 2019. Mid-year through implementation of the plan, i.e. 2017, there has not been any recorded stakeholder engagement on the outcomes and challenges of implementation. The Fisheries Commission (FC) which has the mandate to engage relevant stakeholders in this regard, lacks adequate resources to effectively engage. For this reason, SFMP facilitated five workshops in the four coastal regions of Ghana to fill the gap.

The NFMP highlights amongst others, Closed Season, Additional Fishing Holidays and Capping through Canoe Registration. All these contribute to the promotion of responsible fishing, and are in sync with the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project's (SFMP) objective to rebuild targeted marine stocks through adoption of responsible fishing.

These workshops were against the backdrop of ensuring all-inclusive fisheries management and governance regime. Impacts of implementation of the National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP) was discussed thoroughly, with participants sharing their experiences with others. The stakeholders were also engaged in the development of a fisheries co-management policy framework, by scrutinizing a policy framework document on fisheries co-management being developed by the MoFAD in collaboration with the SFMP.

INTRODUCTION

In the months of July and August of 2017, five Fisheries Working Group (FWG) workshops were organised across the four coastal regions of Ghana. In all, a total of 171 stakeholders, made up of 108 Males and 63 Females participated. In each region, the FWG was extended due to the objectives of the workshops. The workshops were organised for participants to share experiences of the implementation progress of the NFMP. Additionally, a draft fisheries co-management policy which is being drafted was shared with the stakeholders to solicit their inputs into the draft policy document. Participants generally were selected from Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC), National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA), Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association (GITA), Ghana Tuna Association (GTA), NAFAG, Marine Unit of the Ghana Police Service, Ghana Navy, Ghana Air-Force, Fisheries Commission, and the Attorney General's Department.

Objectives of the Workshops

The workshops had two major objectives which included to:

- Solicit feedback from participants on the impacts of the NFMP implementation so far; and the way forward
- Share with stakeholders the draft fisheries co-management policy, and solicit inputs from them

OVERVIEW OF SFMP

In all the workshops, participants were informed of the USAID's contribution as the funding agency for the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP). All implementing partners were mentioned to participants and objectives of the SFMP explained to contribute to rebuild marine fisheries stocks and catches through adoption of responsible fishing practices. It's also

to contribute to the Government of Ghana’s fisheries development objectives and USAID’s Feed the Future (FtF). Participants were informed that the project is three years into implementation, and left with two years to completion. They were hence advised to support the implementing partners in their quest to help rebuild marine fisheries stocks by adopting responsible fishing practices, for the sake of posterity.

FEEDBACK ON NFMP IMPLEMENTATION

This session was done in a plenary and got participants discussing both the positive and negative impacts that have been experienced by the various fishing fleet operators as a result of implementation of the NFMP. The specific aspects of the plan discussed included closed season, additional fishing holidays and capping/canoe registration.

Table 1: Summary of feedback on NFMP Implementation

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON NFMP IMPLEMENTATION				
Theme	Western	Central	Greater Accra	Volta
Closed season	The information gathered were similar across all regions. The 3 months closed season for trawlers was very beneficial especially to artisanal fishers and fishmongers whose catch and sales respectively increased over the period			
Additional Fishing Holiday	Sundays and Tuesdays (new concerns coming up that this may disturb fishing on Mondays which will fall within the fishing holidays and may lead to more infringements)	Sundays and Tuesday	Sundays and Tuesdays (but needs time for wider stakeholder consultations)	Saturdays and Sundays (but ready to agree to the generally agreed days. However, this may seem to be infringing Fante culture on the Voltarians)
Capping / Canoe Registration	Information on canoe registration has been spread to the greater majority of fishermen. All participants agreed that it is in order that a deadline (end of October, 2017) has been given for all canoe owners to conform to.			
No of participants	Total = 57 Males = 47 Females = 10	Total = 36 Males = 19 Females = 17	Total = 39 Males = 20 Females = 19	Total = 39 Males = 22 Females = 17

Closed Season

Participants informed that the closed season was targeted at the Trawlers and spanned 3-months (starting from November 2016). While the trawlers shared a bitter experience, the other fleet operators shared a more joyous experience.

It was well agreed by all participants that the closed season was well observed. In Western Region, this was supported by the Ghana Air-Force representative’s report that all trawlers that were observed on Ghana’s seas during the period were travelling to neighboring countries.

During this fallow period, most of the industrial vessels resorted to mending of nets and repair of other gears. The one-most relevant experience shared by the trawlers was that fact that the closed season brought a lot of financial constraints to owners and crew on industrial trawl vessels. Nonetheless, representative of the trawlers indicated their continuous support for the process and have therefore written to the fisheries commission to help assess the impacts of the closed season and how best to go about its implementation going forward.

Other stakeholders, especially the women, explained the rationale behind their joy and praises for the Fisheries Commission (FC) for implementing such a closed season. They explained that one major observation they made during the period is the increased fish stocks that were made available to canoe fishermen during their expeditions from November, 2016 through to March, 2017. This in effect led to improved sales by fishmongers in the major market centers such as Kumasi market, thereby increasing their profit margin. Quite interestingly, they hinted of an observation that *some fish species that according to their perception had gone extinct were harvested during the closed season*, which needs further studies.

Some allegations cropped up during the discussions which implied that the closed season eventually benefited the trawlers more than artisanal fisheries, since the trawlers used illegal means to trawl mid-water with illegal gears, after the closed season. By this the trawlers captured fish species which are mainly within the Inshore Exclusive Zone (IEZ). This is making them to continue landing juvenile fish. *There is a yawning gap between the conditions given the bottom trawlers and their activities on the ground*, stated a participant.

The stakeholders therefore implored the Fisheries Commission to introduce and enforce a gear policy to enhance the benefits of the closed season. It was added that the trawlers should not be permitted to conduct mid-water trawling after the observation of the closed season.

Matilda Quist of the Fisheries Commission used the opportunity to explain some concepts to the stakeholders. She hinted that trawlers who do bottom trawling were allowed to fish for only Demersals species with a maximum by-catch of 15%. She noted that in the current licensing regime, even the 15% by-catch has been abolished effective end of first quarter of 2017. Hence no trawler is going to use the allowable by-catch caveat as an excuse to do mid-water trawling.

Additional Fishing Holiday

This is targeted at the artisanal fishers. Information shared indicated that in most cases, the additional fishing holiday has sunk well into the fishermen. Tuesday has been agreed as a constant fishing holiday although a few fishing communities were rather practicing it on other days such as Thursday. The Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) has had regional and national discussions as to which day to agree generally to add to the Tuesday.

Central Region decided on Sunday in addition to Tuesday but are still waiting for approval from the council and the Fisheries Commission to announce and declare these days as fishing holidays. Greater Accra has asked for more time to allow wider consultations on the issue. They have actually agreed on Sundays and Tuesdays in principle but needs to consult widely. Western Region has agreed on Sunday as additional fishing holiday but there has been concerns to hold on with its implementation to allow for more discussions. This is because others would prefer Mondays and Tuesdays instead of Sunday and Tuesday, with a fishing day in between. This is going to make implementation difficult, they said. Volta Region wish for Saturday and Sunday as fishing holidays, although they are ready to agree to the final verdict of the council.

Capping / Canoe Registration

The canoe registration process introduced by the Fisheries Commission has been quite successful. Most canoes have registered and have been embossed. However, about 5% have still not complied. The fisheries commission has given these canoes up to the end of October, 2017 to comply. Those who fail to comply will be automatically capped and be sanctioned by the Fisheries enforcement unit (FEU).



Fig. 1: A picture of female participant in Volta Region commenting on the policy framework document



Fig. 2: A picture of some Greater Accra participants scrutinizing the policy framework document, in groups with some Fisheries Commission representatives



Fig. 3: A Picture of women representatives from Volta and Western Region presenting their inputs on behalf of NAFPTA



Fig. 4: A picture of industrial trawlers' representative making some submissions



Fig. 5: A picture of GNCFC's executive leader making some submissions

DISCUSSIONS AND INPUTS INTO THE DRAFT FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

A power-point presentation detailing what fisheries co-management is, was presented to participants to increase their understanding on the concept of fisheries co-management. Historical co-management attempts in Ghana was shared by the participants who were once engaged in the Community-Based Fisheries Management Committees (CBFMCs). This was followed by an in-depth discussion on the draft fisheries co-management policy framework. Each participant was given a copy of the draft document, which helped facilitation of the exercise. Participants were also grouped into focus groups to discuss their inputs and present to a plenary. At the end of the sessions, each stakeholder group presented their inputs and have been collated in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of inputs into draft fisheries co-management policy framework

PAGE NUMBER	ISSUE/TOPIC	GENERAL CONSENSUS
Page 5	Guiding Principles	<p>For the sake of the dignity and the already existing roles being played by Chief Fishermen, it is appropriate to ensure he heads all committees. This already exists in all landing beaches such as in the pre-mix committee, and has been so over a long period of time. Therefore chief fishermen shall be the automatic chairman for co-management committee (where there are two or more chief fishermen, they shall agree among themselves who chairs the co-management within the specific management area).</p> <p>It is therefore strongly recommended that each co-management committee is led by a vice chair, with the committee being accountable to the chief fishermen who assume the chairmanship role but may not necessarily be a voting member, rather have an oversight responsibility over the committee.</p>
Page 12	Financing the Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point numbers 1 and 2 need to be merged because they are the same under section 37a of the Fisheries Act 625. • An additional point (point number 8) was suggested and agreed by all. It reads, “Where applicable, 20% of other sources such as fines charged from arbitration and the collection of fish by female fisher leaders (Konkohene, Woleianye, etc.) should go into supporting co-management. It was explained that this will ensure responsibility of the resource users and ownership of the co-management agenda. • In the last sentence, the statement should be rephrased to read ‘need for high level <i>governmental support</i> to ensure the effective implementation of this policy; instead of reading <i>Political support</i> (the rationale is that there is every need to support depoliticisation of the fisheries sector)
P. 16	Co-mgt. committee membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Scale unit committee membership should not be more than 7 if it’s community-specific. • Large scale should not be more than 15 but should at all-time be an odd number

P. 17	Demersals Committee Appointment and Tenure of office Elections	There is the need for clarity on sentence ...Fisheries, processors, enforcement unit etc... Consensus was built on 3 years The electoral commission should be the body to conduct the elections, as this is the case in all elections concerning committees related to the fisheries sector even at the community levels
P. 18	Roles of co-management committee The role of MOFAD and the Fisheries Commission <i>(Community-based committees shall be authorized to fine violators up to a maximum not to exceed GSH 1,000 for any one offense and use these fines for operations of the committee.)</i>	Last sentence should read “Other roles and responsibilities can be authorized as can be legally delegated and as deemed appropriate by the FC or Regional Director of the FC in consultation with the committee”. A consensus was reached on between 50 and 500 penalty units
p. 22	Devolution of Authority	The word ‘devolution’ as used in page 13 must be defined under Glossary of Terms and Concepts in page 22
p. 17-21	Roles	A consensus was reached that the role of enforcement agencies in the co-management agenda should clearly be defined in the policy document. Suggested roles for the enforcement agencies include the following:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure arrest of culprits and without bias. (even members of co-mgt. groups who offend should equally be arrested) • Processing of evidence gathered by co-mgt. committee groups • Communication with co-mgt. groups • Train co-mgt. groups with requisite skills • Protect sources of information • Arrest/ invite leaders/Chief fishermen who allow illegalities for questioning. • Maintain visibility at beaches
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CONCLUSION

The NFMP implementation is on course, though monitoring its progress has not been regular. It is recommended that a similar workshop with stakeholders to monitor its progress be conducted yearly from now till the end of the plan, so as to improve implementation going forward.

Closed season as a management option has been accepted by fishermen and caused artisanal fishers to embrace other management options such as additional fishing holidays and capping through canoe registrations. The Fisheries Commission has given an ultimatum (end of October, 2017) to artisanal fishers to register their canoes or face the consequences. The workshops provided FC the opportunity to spread information on the ultimatum to the grassroots.

Participants were particularly happy about the way and manner the workshops were organised and the diverse stakeholder groups that participated. On the co-management policy framework, they embraced the concept, and showed so much joy for participating in the review. By this, they hoped that the policy will contribute meaningfully to a proper management of Ghana's fisheries through collaborative efforts.

One most impressive aspect of the policy, according to the participants, is the sustainability approach to the policy, which seeks to diversify the financing sources. The conscious approach to include specific roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders was also noted to be in order. This approach is in the right direction since fisheries management is not the duty of Fisheries Commission alone.

Overall, the workshops were rated by the participants as a worthy one, and one of the most-informing and educative workshops, which has inspired a sense of ownership amongst resource users to take up roles in managing and conserving fisheries resources.