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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Initial Stakeholder Engagements in 2015



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Cover photo: Meeting with Traditional leaders at Apam (Photo credits: Abraham Ahenkorah)

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ACRONYMS

CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CENFA	Central Regional Fishermen and Fishmongers Association
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLaT	Child Labour and Trafficking
CRC	Coastal Resources Center at the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island
DAA	Development Action Association
DAASGIFT	Daasgift Quality Foundation
DCE	District Chief Executive
FC	Fisheries Commission
FoN	Friends of Nation
HM	Hen Mpoano
ICFG	Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance
MASLOC	Medium and Small Loan Scheme
MCE	Municipal Chief Executive
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
REP	Rural Enterprise Programme
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Program
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Development Program

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The importance of Ghana's fisheries to the local economy cannot be overstated. The sector directly employs about 135,000 fishermen in the marine capture sub sector alone, 92% of whom are artisanal fishers. An additional 27,000 women, who play critical roles in fishing households, are involved in fish processing and marketing. An estimated two million Ghanaians rely on fishing either directly or indirectly for their livelihoods.

The canoe fleet that makes up the majority of landings and employs the greatest number of people have been greatly affected in recent decades. The annual catch fell to just over 17,000 metric tons in 2012 from a high of 120,000 metric tons just a dozen years earlier (Western Region Fisheries Sector Review, USAID/Ghana Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance (ICFG) Project).

In the US the science-based management approaches implemented since 2000 have been able to rebuild 37 fish stocks around the country, create new jobs, and generate more than \$600 million of net revenue in the fishing sector. It is in this regard that the United States Agency on International Development has committed funds to support Ghana to rebuild fish stocks using the US science based management approaches.

The objective of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project is to rebuild marine fisheries stocks and catches through adoption of responsible fishing practices. The project will contribute to the Government of Ghana's fisheries development objectives and USAID's Feed the Future Initiative.

Working closely with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and the Fisheries Commission, USAID/Ghana SFMP aims to end overfishing of key stocks important to local food security through a multi-pronged approach:

- Improved legal enabling conditions for co-management, use rights and effort-reduction strategies
- Strengthened information systems and science-informed decision-making
- Increased constituencies that provide the political and public support needed to rebuild fish stocks
- Implementation of applied management initiatives for several targeted fisheries ecosystems

The project is being implemented by the Coastal Resource Centre (CRC) of the University of Rhode Islands (URI) through a consortium of partners including SNV and DAA. SNV and DAA are responsible for implementing the project in Apam and Winneba.

In implementing the project, there is the need to identify stakeholders within the Fisheries Industry in the two pilot communities (Winneba and Apam) in order to introduce the project to them and deliberate on potential options for achieving the goal of the project.

So far SNV has contacted the traditional Chiefs for communities, the District Assemblies, the Fisheries officers, and the Business Advisory centers under the Rural Enterprise program for both communities. Fish processing groups and fishermen associations have been met in both communities. Also the Central Region Fishermen and Fish processors association (CENFA) has been identified and other organisations such as Challenging Heights, Plan Ghana and International Needs have also been identified.

Below is a summary of some of the initial meetings carried out with the stakeholders.

2.0 SUMMARY STAKEHOLDER MEETING REPORTS

2.1 Meeting with Traditional Leaders in Apam

The SFMP team was given the opportunity to introduce the project concept to the Paramount Chief and a number of sub chiefs and family heads of the Apam traditional area totaling about 42 leaders; made up of 30 males and 12 females.

Nancy Otu of DAA informed the gathering of why the need for this project, who is funding the project, whom the implementing organisation and partners are and the beneficiary communities and people. She also informed the gathering of the project concept and outlined the immediate activities that will be implemented in the community as:

- The baseline survey
- Women group formation and strengthening
- Stakeholder engagement
- Sensitisation workshops
- Sardinella Value chain study and Fuelwood value chain study
- Scoping survey on post harvest improvements
- Promotion of improved cookstoves
- Post harvest loss studies

The gathering was very interested and presented a number of issues and concerns they needed the team to take notice of:

- The issue of Chinese trawlers fishing in Ghanaian waters. Their main problem is the large amounts of fish they catch daily and the way they handle by-catch; they throw them back into the sea, whether dead or alive.
- Inappropriate fishing methods especially the use of dynamite and light for fishing amongst local fishermen. They however explained that the use of dynamite and light for fishing is not a major problem in Apam area but occurs more in the Western region.
- The Chief advised that there should be periods of the year (upwelling periods) where fishing should be prohibited. He asked that the project should institute a closed season within the fishing year especially during upwelling seasons.
- The Chief spoke about his dissatisfaction of the efforts of the Fisheries Commission. He explained that he believes if more coastal dwellers are employed by the Commission, or appointed to the board they can have better impact at improving the fisheries industry since most of these coastal dwellers understand the fishery and issues relating to the entire value chain of fishing.
- He asked that there should be variable processing options for the fish which can lead to employment and bring in appreciable income. He mentioned canneries as an option. (Value addition to processed fish).
- The paramount chief (Obotantam Edu Effrim X) gave the team (SFMP) a 6 months' ultimatum to address the issue of the Chinese trawlers else the project may not have his full support in the years to come. However, in response to the 6-month ultimatum by the paramount chief, Abraham Ahenkorah pleaded with him and his elders to exercise some patience with the project implementation since it is a 5-year project and further reassured them that the SFMP will gradually address this issue.

Other members of the gathering expounded on the various issues stated above and gave examples of fishery management efforts in other countries such as La Cote D'Ívoire, Gabon

and Senegal. They explained the work of fishery inspectors (who are usually fishermen) who ensure that correct fishing nets are used and fish is handled in a healthy manner on the canoes. The inspectors report directly to the fisheries officers. They suggested that, this should be replicated in Ghana.

A member of the gathering made a very insightful remark that, though small gauge fishing nets could be a problem for catching small pelagic fishes, at times even bigger gauge nets can also trap small pelagic due to the massive catch (especially in the case of Chinese trawlers) so that smaller fishes cannot escape.

The team answered a number of questions from the gathering and distributed the SFMP leaflets. Benedicta Samey of SNV informed the gathering of the sensitisation workshop planned for Tuesday the 26th of May 2015. They agreed to attend the workshop in their numbers.

The Chief expressed gratitude to USAID for selecting Apam as one of the pilot communities on the project and reiterated his support to the project. An introductory letter and invitation letter to participate in the sensitisation workshop was presented to the chief on later visits.

2.2 Meeting with District Assembly - Gomoa West District

The project team, made up of representatives from SNV and DAA has so far had two main meetings with the District Assembly. The initial meeting held on the 28th of April 2015, focused on identifying all the critical stakeholders within the assembly and in brief meetings, explained the project concept and areas of collaboration with the various stakeholders.

The team first met with the Social Welfare officer, Mr Ben Narh who participated in the child labour training workshop carried out at Cape Coast on 25/26th of March 2015. He facilitated brief meetings with the District Chief Executive (DCE) Hon. Theophilus Aidoo Mensah, the Coordinating Director Mr Osei Asare, the planning officer Mr Daniel Baah and the Rural Enterprise Programme Officer, Mr Dominic. The team was given audience at the various offices to briefly explain the project concept.

The second meeting which was held on the 5th of May 2015 was organised by the Coordinating Director, who brought together all the major stakeholders in the assembly (DCE, Planning officer, Social welfare officer, Fisheries officer, Rural Enterprise program officer and all other heads of Department).

This meeting gave the SFMP team a better platform to inform the assembly of the project concept and the immediate activities that will be carried out in Apam. The participants were 13 in number, made up of 4 females and 9 males.

Benedicta Samey of SNV lead the discussion, and explained the concept of the SFMP giving examples of similar interventions that have been carried out in other coastal countries such as Gabon and the kind of benefits that they currently enjoy as a result of USAID support to the fisheries industry.

Benedicta further explained the different needs and roles some departments in the Assembly can assist the project with:

- The Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) team will work with the Social welfare officer in the area of child trafficking studies and interventions.
- The project will collaborate with the fisheries officer to carry out improvement interventions towards the fishers (processors and fishermen).
- The project team will collaborate with the Rural Enterprise office for Business development training for target groups.

Abraham Ahenkorah of DAA briefly explained the year one activities that will be carried out in Apam for their information.

Two letters were submitted to the DCE. An introductory letter about the project and a letter of invitation to the sensitisation workshop; he accepted both letters and informed the team of their ready support to the project. He also selected the Planning officer to be a direct contact for the SFM Project at the District Assembly.

As a follow up to this meeting the District Assembly has replied to the introductory letter that was presented to them, formally accepting the project in their district and stating their support to the project. The planning officer was formally mentioned as the contact for the SFM project at the District Assembly. This letter was received on the 12th of May, 2015.

Also, the District Assembly wrote a letter to the Chief Fisherman informing them of the SFM project and inviting all of them to attend the sensitisation workshop at Apam, scheduled for Tuesday 26th of May 2015.

2.3 Meeting with Coordinating Director, Effutu Municipal Assembly – Winneba

The SFMP team made up of two representatives from SNV and two representatives from DAA had a meeting with the Coordinating Director of the Municipality on Tuesday the 5th of May, 2015. In all three females and 5 males participated in the meeting. The team was informed that the MCE had passed away, thus the Coordinating Director is acting till a new Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) is appointed.

The team presented an introductory letter for the project to the Coordinating Director and briefly explained the project concept to him and his team (Deputy Coordinating Director, Social welfare officer and Zonal fisheries officer). They made the following submissions:

- The Director explained that the poverty level in the fishing community is very high to the extent that fishermen sell their children out to other fishermen along the Volta (child labour) for as low as GHC50.00.
- He was particularly interested in developing other livelihoods that can increase beneficiary disposable income and improve upon the living standards of the fishers.
- The assembly has worked with the immigration service for a number of years to fight and reduce the incidence of child trade in the community.
- The only problem they are currently facing is the aspect of integrating the rescued children back into their families and into the society. The main issue remains, parents don't have money to take care of the children thus when these children are brought back home there are issues of acceptability.
- He said the most viable small scale economic activity existing in Winneba currently is vegetable farming. He also suggested the need to add fish culture to the livelihood intervention programme.
- The District assembly has worked with the World Bank and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in related projects in the past and they developed a landing site development plan; of which we were given a copy.
- He informed us that there is a ceremonial paramount chief who has jurisdiction over most sectors of the traditional area except for the Aboakyir festival. Thus the Coordinating Director was willing to lead the team to the chief to introduce the project. The meeting date was set for Tuesday 12th May, 2015.
- We were informed of other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) existing in Winneba whose activities are related; Challenging Heights, Plan Ghana, International Needs and Bethany Christian Services.

The District assembly has not replied to the introductory letter yet but has directed the Deputy Coordinating Director to be a focal person for the project at the Assembly. The Deputy Coordinating Director, Maame Esi Aikins has been very supportive since this meeting and was very instrumental in the planning of both the sensitisation workshop and the World Environment Day celebration at Winneba.

2.4 Meeting with Zonal Fisheries Officer and the Rural Enterprise Programme Officer, Winneba

On the same day, 5th May, 2015 the team had a follow up meeting with the Zonal fisheries officer and the Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) officer. 6 people were present in the meeting, 3 females and 3 males. The objective for meeting with the Fisheries officer was to establish a relationship to collaborate efforts in women group formation and strengthening, and awareness creation amongst fishermen. Also the team needed to understand if there were ongoing activities planned for the just created women groups towards the national fish processors association executive body constitution. Finally, the team wanted to know whether the WARF project is being implemented in Winneba or Apam (Zonal Fisheries officer) oversees Apam and Winneba and its environs) and opportunities for collaboration.

The objective for meeting with the REP officer was to identify business development training options available to women groups and how often these trainings are carried out. The following are the outcomes of the meeting.

- There are seven (7) fish processing groups in Winneba, five (5) main groups within Winneba and two (2) satellite groups from Akosua village and Woarawobeba.
- The Fisheries officer informed that there is not much activity on his desk currently but is awaiting the next operational plan on the West Africa Regional Fisheries Development program (WARFP) for the District.
- They facilitated the formation of the district fish processors association using the already existing processing groups in the communities.
- Each group has a 5-member executive team made up of Chairman, vice chairman, secretary, organiser and treasurer.
- In talking to the Rural Enterprise Program officer; she explained that they undertake various trainings in business development, financial management and on various vocational trades. They are currently planning literacy and numeracy training for some women groups. Most of the women who have benefited from their trainings are usually farmers and traders; they seldom have fishmongers joining the trainings.
- She explained that they can package trainings for them when our groups are ready.
- The noted that the trainings are not directly conducted by REP but they contract consultants to carry out the trainings.

2.5 Meeting with Nenyi Ghartey, Paramount Chief for Winneba

Abraham Asare and Reynolds Ofori of DAA represented SFMP in the meeting with the Omanhene for Winneba. There were 12 participants, made up of 8 males and 4 females. He was accompanied by Mr Owusu Ansah, the Coordinating Director for Winneba Municipal Assembly. The meeting was held on the 12th of May 2015 at the Chief's palace.

The Omanhene through his linguist welcomed the team to his palace, and permitted them to present their message. Mr Owusu Ansah explained the purpose of the visit. He started by narrating how the Municipal as a whole does not lack infrastructural amenities but rather how the municipal has to deal with the increasing poverty levels among the fisher folks. He

explained that, though the municipal can boast of many fine institutions of academic learning one can clearly observe that the natives, especially those from the fishing communities, represent a discouraging fraction of those admitted to these institutions.

In his view, high poverty levels among the fisher folks have force them to involve themselves in child labour and child trafficking issues. He also acknowledged low fish stocks in the sea and argued that if women especially those involved in post-harvest processes are gainfully employed, it will go a long way to improve family life. He concluded his introduction by introducing the SFMP team.

Abraham Asare, the Project officer for DAA in the Apam & Winneba area introduced the project and clearly outlined the various aspects and objectives of the SFMP. He made mention of how DAA in close collaboration with SNV and the fisheries commission will work hand in hand in these communities. Among other things he mentioned that the project will implement the following activities:

- Carry out activities towards rebuilding fish stocks especially focusing on small pelagics such as the sardinnella
- Formation and strengthening of fish processing groups.
- Conduct a value chain study on small pelagics fishery, i.e from “net to plate”
- Conduct fuel wood value chain study and the provision of efficient wood stoves for fish smoking
- Child labour and trafficking issues would be given consideration under the SFMP

He mentioned that other implementing partners such as SNV, CEWEFIA, FRIEND OF NATIONS (F.O.N), HEN POANO (HM), DAASGIFT, etc. will be visiting the community to facilitate other aspects of the project. He concluded by soliciting support from the traditional leaders so that all can reap the benefits from the project at the end of the 5 years. He used the opportunity to inform and invite the paramount chief and all his elders to the sensitization workshop slated for June 2nd, 2015.

The paramount chief through the linguist responded by thanking the team for the visit. He asked that the partners in the project should seek advice from the traditional leaders in their dealings with the community. He suggested that, where the project wants the traditional leaders to lead, they will lead and where the project wants the traditional leaders to support they will support. He urged all his elders to give their full support to the project implementation. He thanked the team and was full of optimism for the project.

2.6 Meeting with Central Regional Fishermen and Fishmongers Association

The Central Regional Fishermen and Fishmongers Association (CENFA) is an organisation of Fishermen, fishmongers and processors, canoe owners, and chief fishermen. The association seeks to bring together all individuals involved in the fish farming value chain. That is from harvesters to processors and to the traders in order to sensitize them on safe fishing practices as well as create a support system for the members.

In view of this, SNV together with CEWEFIA, one of the implementing partners of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project, visited CENFA on the 12th of May 2015, during one of its meetings and had the opportunity to meet and interact with some of the executives and the members of the association. In all there were about 30 participants; made up of 3 females and 27 males.

The SFMP team made up of three representatives from SNV and one from CEWEIFIA took turns to brief the members on the concept of SFMP and the levels of engagement with the

various stakeholders. The team informed the members that the main objective of the project is to increase small pelagic stocks in Ghana's coastal waters. In doing this, illegal fishing must be reduced to a minimum, fishing activities will be regulated, livelihoods will be provided, value chain assessments and improvements will be carried out among other things. The members were also informed of the immediate activities that will be carried out in the various selected communities.

In response to the presentation by the SFMP team, the CENFA executives and members shared some concerns and challenges with the team.

According to them, most organisations who come to the coast to carry out similar projects do not meet with the fishermen themselves but mostly with the canoe owners and chief fisherman, most of whom are not directly involved in fishing activities. They therefore advised that sensitisation programs should be carried out at the grassroots; the fishermen and fish processors. More training programs should be planned for the grassroots instead of their leaders only.

They also said that they try not to resort to the use of dynamite, generators and other illegal methods of fishing but because the water above is warm most of the time, it drives the fishes further down and this gives them low catch; which is a loss to them; thus the need to use explosives to get the fish to come up. Often, even when they use these illegal methods including light fishing, they catch the smaller fishes which don't sell on the market and they end up disposing them in the sea.

The Chinese trawlers also break boundaries in their fishing activities and this also affects the catch of the local fishermen as the trawlers use machinery which makes it easier for them to determine where the fishes are, unlike the local fishermen who have to rely on their instincts and experience at sea.

Also, the Government has cancelled all subsidies on outboard motors and premix, hence they have to strive to purchase these necessities. As an association, they contribute in order to purchase these items for the common use of the members.

They informed the team that the current cost of an outboard motor is GHC 12,000 and the association is purchasing 50 units but have been able to acquire 25 units because each member paid GHC 6,000 to finance the procurement process.

Although CENFA had a hard time registering the organisation, they have finally succeeded in doing so and at the moment Medium and Small Loan Scheme (MASLOC) is supporting them with soft loans to be paid over a period of time by the organisation. CENFA also brings together fishermen, fish processors and a number of chief fishermen and canoe owners from the various communities in the central region such as Apam, Winneba, Elmina, Moree etc. So far, 56 fish mongers have been registered under CENFA and the organisation is trying to find soft loans for the women to improve their businesses.

2.7 Meeting with Fisheries Commission – Post Harvest Division

On Tuesday 16th June 2015 Benedicta Samey of SNV and Abraham Asare of DAA visited the post harvest division of the Fisheries Commission. The team met with Mr Manu the Head of the Division and Mrs Frieda Oduro a staff of the division.

The objective for the meeting was to inform the the Division of SNV and DAA's role in implementing the project and the need for their collaboration and input support in some of the ongoing research activities.

The team informed the Division of some of the activities that will be implemented in Apam and Winneba and the research activities ongoing for which there will be a need for inputs to ensure that all needs of the Fisheries Commission is met in the baseline and value chain studies.

Mr Manu, who has been a part of the project from its inception, explained that he expected that the Fisheries Commission (FC) should have been included in the planning stage of the project. Even though they weren't part of the planning he said his division is willing to support the project whenever there is a need within his capacity.

He stressed that every activity that is being carried out in any of the selected communities should be implemented through and with the fisheries officers at those communities. He asked that for all workshops and trainings we may undertake we should try and involve the executives of either the fish processors national, regional, district or community associations formed by the Fisheries Commission in April 2015.

The team informed the Division of our plan to design a strengthening program for the community groups or associations. The Division expressed much interest and asked that the team should invite them for the planning session, in order for them to give their inputs from the inception. The group therefore decided on a tentative date for the planning meeting; Friday 26th June 2015.

Also the team informed the Division of the working relationship existing between the SFMP team and the Fisheries Officers at Apam and Winneba of which Mr Manu was happy about. He explained that the team can always contact Mrs Frieda Oduro for any information and data we may need. The meeting was fruitful.

2.8 Other Identified Stakeholders

The SFMP team from SNV and DAA have also had brief contacts with other stakeholders such as International Needs, Forestry Division, Wildlife Division, Challenging Heights, Plan Ghana and Microfin all located in Winneba. Detailed meetings will be carried out with the above stated organisation within the next quarter. There is good opportunity for collaboration.

3.0 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the SNV/DAA SFMP team has mobilised a number of stakeholders who are willing to collaborate efforts to achieving the objective of SFMP.

So far the fisheries officers in both communities are working with the team to implement onground activities such as fish processors group formation, baseline survey process coordination and coordination of other programs such as the sensitisation workshops.

Apart from that DAA has engaged 2 liaison officers at Apam and Winneba to facilitate the coordination of activities amongst the women groups. They are Grace Bondzi for Apam and Leticia Dampson for Winneba.

Follow up meetings will be carried out with International Needs, Challenging heights and Microfin Plus Ghana and Plan Ghana.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Central Regional Fishermen and Fishmongers Association (CENFA) should be adopted by the project and supported to strengthen its administration and increase its membership. CENFA is one association that has influential leaders who can encourage their members to support the project in abiding by fishing regulations that may come up in the course of the project.