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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

FWG Workshops on NFMP and Co- Management Implementation



SEPTEMBER, 2017

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF OCEANOGRAPHY



Friends of the Nation

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Citation: Kyei K. Yamoah (2017). FWG workshop on NFMP and Co-Management Implementation. The USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP). Narragansett, RI: Coastal Resources Center, Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island and Friends of the Nation. GH2014_ACT146_FoN. 15pp.

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Prepared for USAID/Ghana under Cooperative Agreement (AID-641-A-15-00001), awarded on October 22, 2014 to the University of Rhode Island, and entitled the USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP).

This document is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The views expressed and opinions contained in this report are those of the SFMP team and are not intended as statements of policy of either USAID or the cooperating organizations. As such, the contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the SFMP team and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Cover photo: A section of participants at the Western Regional FWG workshop on NFMP and Co-Management Implementation (Photo credit: Philip Prah, 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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INTRODUCTION

This report provides the summary of inputs from stakeholders' engagement workshops on the draft National Fisheries Co-Management Policy for Ghana.

Fisheries co-management, also known as collaborative fisheries management, is a strategy for managing fisheries resources where responsibility for decision making on how the resources will be managed sustainably is shared between government, resource users and other stakeholders. It is globally viewed as an accepted best practice in fisheries management and considered more effective than conventional top down command and control management systems.

Ghana has been practicing co-management in various forms (formal and informal) for several decades. Over the years there have been experiences in terms of traditional management and government supported community-based groups and other collaborative management arrangements between government and stakeholders with varying degrees of success.

However, Ghana's current legal framework and policy statements provide little guidance of how co-management should be carried out. The fisheries Act 625 and various fisheries regulations do not provide information on how to proceed with co-management schemes.

In Ghana, the approach to-date has been mainly a consultative form of co-management which has failed to prevent overfishing of the majority of fish stocks in the marine and freshwater areas of national jurisdiction. Hence, a fresh approach to management is needed that can contribute to reversing these trends.

Against this background, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and the Fisheries Commission with support of SFMP drafted a National Co-Management Policy to promote a bottom-up approach to managing Ghana's fisheries resources to achieve the objectives set forth in its Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Plan.

The purpose of the co-management policy document therefore, is to lay out a road map for Ghana's fisheries management that transitions from a more top-down consultative management framework to an approach that will transition into a system that allows some or full delegation of authority to resource users and other stakeholders in the decision making processes.

This draft policy framework was subjected to stakeholder consultations workshops through the Fisheries Working Group (FWG) platforms with the aim to collate inputs to refine the draft policy and also promote stakeholder ownership and support for the implementation once full implementation begins.

BACKGROUND

The Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) is being implemented for a 5-year period from 2014 to 2019 with the support from USAID/Ghana. The key objective of the project is to contribute to the rebuilding of marine fisheries stock (small pelagics) and catches through adoption of responsible fishing practices.

SFMP also contributes to USAID strategic objectives for biodiversity conservation and food security as well as making significant contributions to Ghana's national strategies for biodiversity and wetlands conservation, climate change adaptation, and fisheries and aquaculture sector development.

The goal of the SFMP is also to support the government of Ghana in achieving its development objectives of poverty reduction, food security, sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation by contributing to the vision of: resuscitating dwindling pelagic fisheries stock; ensure that 'Ghana's coastal and marine ecosystems are sustainably managed to provide goods and services that generate long term socio-economic benefits to communities while sustaining biodiversity.'

In order to sustain the socio-economic benefits from coastal resources and biodiversity, there was the need for a collaborative approach to fisheries management rather than leaving the fisheries commission to single-handedly manage the fisheries and coastal resources.

SFMP therefore facilitated the formation of Fisheries Working Group (FWG) in the four (4) coastal regions of Ghana. The role of the FWGs are to play an advisory role among others to the Fisheries Commission relative to policy implementation and on fisheries management issues. In addition, the FWG seeks to promote communications among fishers and stakeholders to contribute to improved fisheries governance at the regional and local levels.

In 2017, FoN under SFMP organized Fisheries Working Group (FWG) workshops in the four coastal regions of Ghana. The FWG workshops were used to review the draft co-management policy and collate recommendations to refine the document.

The workshops also discussed how the FWGs would promote the piloting of fisheries co-management structures at the regional levels.

The successful implementation of the fisheries co-management in Ghana is expected to contribute to improved management and rebuild Ghana fish stocks and ensure food security for many Ghanaians.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The FWG co-management workshops had two major objectives which included to:

- Share with stakeholders the draft fisheries co-management policy for them to understand the content.
- Solicit inputs from stakeholders in the four (4) coastal regions on the draft Co-management policy for consideration to refine the document.

AGENDA

The Agenda of the workshops were:

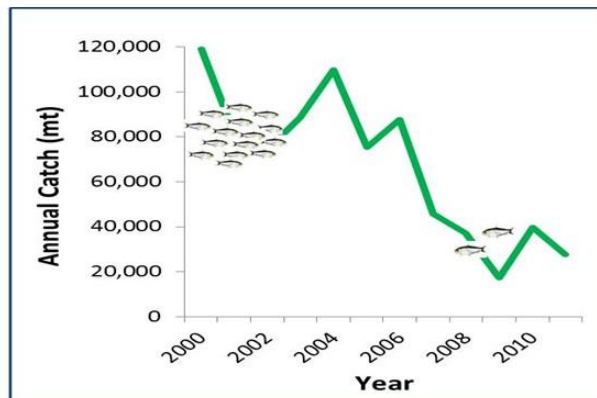
1. Presentation of the overview of the SFMP project. (to inform participants about SFMP).
2. Presentation of the draft- co-management policy. (to share the content of the policy).
3. Open Forum (to discuss the content of the co-mgt. policy and collate inputs/ recommendations for consideration to refine the document).

OVERVIEW OF SFMP

At all the workshops, participants were informed of the USAID's contribution, as the funding agency, for the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP). Participants were also informed that the goal of the SFMP is to contribute to rebuild marine fisheries stocks and catches through adoption of responsible fishing practices.

SFMP Objective

- Rebuild fish stocks target.
- Adopt sustainable fish methods.
- Bring profitability to the fishery



SOURCE: Proceedings of the 3rd National Fisheries Dialogue WorldFish USAID-URI ICFG. 2013.

Recent stock assessments of small pelagics reported that these stocks are severely overfished and that overfishing continues to exacerbate beyond the level of sustainability.

Figure 1. A chart showing the declining annual fish catches and the SFMP objectives



Figure 2. Pictures with Mr. Kyei Yamoah presenting the overview of the SFMP at the FWG workshops

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE DRAFT FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

Power-point presentation was made to explain the content of the fisheries co-management policy to participants at the various workshops.

The presentation explained that the draft co-management policy provides guidance for the implementation of co-management. The policy was also designed to provide a road map for the next phase of evolution of co-management in Ghana.

The presentation explained that the co-management policy seeks to address the following key issues:

- The involvement of local communities in fisheries management planning and decision making.
- Entrust control and access to the fisheries resources at all levels to local communities and various management units.
- Regulation of iuu fishing activities at the local level with the involvement community and supported by the feu.
- Community level and other forms of support to the fisheries commission to implement management interventions at various fish landing centers in the country.

The presentation also explained that the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development has taken cognizance of the socio-economic importance of the fisheries sector, especially the contribution of the sector to GDP, national food security and nutrition, employment and foreign exchange earnings. Therefore, the fisheries co-management policy was also designed to:

- Provide the framework for consultative stakeholder engagement and decision making with respect to defining strategic measures for rejuvenating the fisheries sector with active participation and defined roles for all stakeholders
- Promote voluntary compliance with management regulations, standards and interventions by fishers.
- Establish and empower stakeholder led institutions that facilitate sustainable fisheries management for clearly defined management units and
- Facilitate mobilization of resources for co-management interventions

The presentation explained the detailed sections of the policy participants and noted that;

The draft policy is to help achieve various fisheries development and management objectives and guide the development of fisheries co-management institutions, with the aim to rejuvenate and sustain the fisheries resources of Ghana through the devolution of management decision making from central to local management authorities.

The presentation concluded that the goals and objectives set out in this policy were in consonance with existing legal instruments; policies, laws, regulations, and standards.



Figure 3. A picture of Mr. Kyei Yamoah explaining the Fisheries Co-Management Policy.

OPEN FORUM

The open forum session provided the platform for participants to discuss the content of the co-management policy. Each participant was given a copy of the draft document, which helped facilitation of the exercise. During this session, participants asked questions to understand the contents of the policy. Participants were also grouped into focus groups to discuss their inputs and they presented to a plenary. Summary of the inputs made from all the workshop have been collated in table 2 below.

Table 1. Summary of inputs for 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 should 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 was also 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 under the Financing the Policy could 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, participants proposed that 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> <p>(the rationale is that there is every need to support depoliticisation of the fisheries sector)</p> |
| 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 | <p>There is the need for clarity on sentence ...Fisheries, processors, enforcement unit etc...</p> <p>Consensus was built on 3 years</p> |

| PAGE NUMBER | ISSUE/TOPIC | GENERAL CONSENSUS |
|-------------|--|---|
| | Appointment and Tenure of office Elections | 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 could 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 should be defined under Glossary of Terms and Concepts in page 22 |
| p. 17-21 | Roles: Enforcement Agencies | 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. |



Figure 4 A Picture of women representatives from Volta and Western Region presenting their inputs on behalf of NAFPTA.



Figure 5 A picture of industrial trawlers' representative making some submissions on the co-management policy.



Figure 6 A Picture of Nana Pegu, executive member of GNCFC, making a submission to the policy on behalf of the GNCFC.



Figure 7 A Picture of Mr. Alex Sabah, Director of Fisheries W/R, making a submission to the Co-Management Policy on behalf of Fisheries Commission.

CONCLUSION

Participants were particularly happy about the way and manner the workshops were organized 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Participants strongly recommended that stakeholders should be engaged on the final draft policy before approval.

They also recommended that there will be need for adequate consultations and communication on the approved policy to the broader fisher folks to proper effective implementation of the policy.