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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Regional Discussions on the NFMP Through Fisheries Working Group



AUGUST, 2017

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF OCEANOGRAPHY



Friends of the Nation

This publication is available electronically on the Coastal Resources Center's website at http://www.crc.uri.edu/projects_page/ghanasfmp/

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Citation: Friends of the Nation (2017). Regional Discussions on the NFMP Through FWG. 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_ACT147_FoN 15 pp.

Authority/Disclaimer:

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: MCS Officer of the Fisheries Commission making a point (Credit: Philip Prah, FoN)

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ACRONYMS

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
F2F	Fisherman to Fisherman
FEU	Fisheries Enforcement Unit
FMP	Fisheries Management Plan
FoN	Friends of the Nation
FWG	Fisheries Working Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPHA	Ghana Ports and Harbour Authority
IEZ	Inshore Economic Zone
MCS	Monitoring Control and Surveillance
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-CRC	University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Center
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WR	Western Region

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BACKGROUND

Ghana's five-year National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP 2015-2019) sets out key management measures including; introduction of closed season, introduction of fishing effort reduction measures and additional fishing holidays for artisanal fishers among others. The successful implementation of the NFMP will contribute to end overfishing and promote the rebuilding of the marine fish stocks especially the small pelagics.

But key stakeholders have raised concerns about the fishers' lack of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the content of the NFMP. This gap in sensitization provides room for the fishers to resist management measures which could lead to the failure of the NFMP to achieve its objectives.

In view of this, FoN organized regional discussions on the NFMP under the Fisheries Working Group (FWG) regional platforms.

KEY OUTPUT OF THE MEETINGS

These meetings brought together key fisheries stakeholders in the various regions to share and discuss the progress of implementation of the National Fisheries Management Plan. The meetings also provided the platform for the Regional Fisheries commission officers to explain the content of the NFMP and also address fishers' concerns about the implementation of the plan.

These meetings created the platform for the participants to discuss and outline key responsibilities of stakeholders to support the successful implementation of the NFMP within the respective regions. All relevant stakeholders (including FC, District Assemblies, religious leaders and the local police) in the respective regions were involved in the meetings. Key concerns and suggestions from the regional meetings included:

- The need to have two uniform fishing holidays across the entire coast of Ghana to avoid potential conflict, confusion and promote compliance among fishermen
- The need to involve traditional leaders to help change traditional fishing holidays in the respective regions to the agreed days of Tuesday and Sunday
- The need for extensive communication on moratorium on entry of canoe for the marine fisheries in all regions to promote compliance.
- The need for FC must conduct mop-up exercise to register all remaining canoes before the date was set for moratorium on new entry of canoes for marine fisheries as part of the NFMP implementation.
- The need for FC to train local sign writers to support the embossment of the canoes
- Fishermen propose to conduct census of all unregistered canoes in their respective communities and communicate to Fisheries Commission to support canoe registration process.

AGENDA FOR THE MEETINGS

The regional discussions on the NFMP under the FWG platform was held in the Western Region, Volta Region, Central Region, Greater Accra Region.

The agenda for the meetings was as follows:

1. Welcome statement and purpose of meeting.
2. Presentation of the Overview of SFMP and the FWG.
3. Presentation on the National Marine Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP).
4. Opens Forum (Experience sharing, Discussions and Recommendations).

WELCOME STATEMENT AND PURPOSE OF MEETING

At the regional meetings, the welcome statement and purpose of meeting was presented by Mr. Donkris Mevuta, the Executive Director of FoN. In his presentations, he informed participants of the relevance of the NFMP, he explained that there were very useful provisions in the NFMP that could contribute to rebuild the marine fish stock if all stakeholders supported the implementation.

He noted that provisions in the NFMP such as reduction of fishing days of trawlers and the number of trawlers, registration of canoes and moratorium for new entrants, Co-management, etc. were very useful fisheries management measures that could contribute to sustainable fisheries management.

He explained that the purpose of the regional meetings was;

- To provide the platform present the NFMP to stakeholders for them to understand the content of the NFMP.
- To collate fishers' concerns about the implementation of the plan.
- To platform for stakeholders to discuss and outline key responsibilities of stakeholders to support the successful implementation of the NFMP within the respective regions.

He encouraged participants to discuss the NFMP and take actions to address challenges of its implementation. He also advised stakeholders to support the implementation of the NFMP to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the NFMP before it ends in 2019.



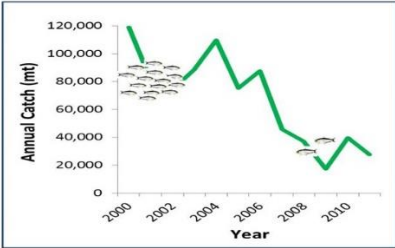
Figure 1. Pictures with Mr. Mevuta, delivering the welcome statement a regional FWG meeting.

OVERVIEW OF SFMP AND FWG

The overview of the SFMP and FWG was presented by Mr. Kyei Kwadwo Yamoah of FoN. He explained that the goal of the SFMP is to rebuild targeted fish stocks, through adoption of sustainable fish methods, and to bring profitability to the fishery. He showed the slide below.

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 2. A picture of a slide with the objectives of SFMP

Explaining further, Mr. Yamoah hinted that a recent stock assessment of small pelagics reported that these stocks are severely overfished and that overfishing continues to exacerbate beyond the level of sustainability.

OVERVIEW OF FISHERIES WORKING GROUP (FWG)

Mr. Yamoah explained the Fisheries Working Group (FWG) concept and noted that one of the key approaches of SFMP is to work through participatory fisheries management processes by contributing to strengthening stakeholder collaboration at the Regional levels through the concept of multi-stakeholder called Fisheries Working Group (FWG). He explained further that the FWG is a regional level advisory group with a mission to provide support and advisory services to the Fisheries Commission.

He noted that membership of the FWG included representatives of the fishers (1-Trawlers, 1-semi-industrial, 2-canoe fishermen), representatives of women fishers (2-women processors/mongers), Regulatory Agencies (1-EPA, 1-Police prosecutor, 1-Ghana Navy, 1-Ghana Air force, 1-Attorney Generals Dept. and Marine Police).

He added that some additional members have been proposed and they included influential traditional leaders from fishing communities, Oil companies' representative and other CSOs.

He explained that SFMP/FoN, serve in an advisory capacity to the FWG and will continue to provide administrative support to guide the execution of the programs and activities of FWG.

He also explained that, the Scope of Work for the FWG included but not limited to the following:

1. Provide fisheries management recommendations to Fisheries Commission for the successful implementation of the National Fishery Management Plan.
2. Support and participate in stakeholder engagement processes toward implementation of the National Fishery Management Plan at the Regional levels.
3. Support with communication and information sharing to fisheries groups and fisheries stakeholders to ensure their understanding of the impacts of implementation of the National Fishery Management Plan.
4. Support and participate in co-mgt. implementation processes at the National and local levels.
5. Participation in regional and national level fisheries policy dialogues and engagements with Fisheries Commission and policy makers to contribute to improved fisheries legislation formulation and implementation.
6. Provide support and advice to SFMP and Fisheries Commission toward improving communication to stakeholders for the adoption of sustainable fishing practices
7. Support communication and the dissemination of SFMP information to fisheries stakeholder institutions and fisher groups; semi-industrial, canoe fishermen, and women processors.
8. Provide advice and support with communication and linkages building with the various Coastal District Assemblies in WR to strengthen their role in fisheries Governance at the District and Regional Scale.
9. Provide recommendations on research priorities and budget planning.
10. Provide support and recommendation on compliance and monitoring.
11. Advise MOFAD and Fisheries Commission on issues affecting fishers in the use of Marine Space.

He concluded that the FWG convey periodic meetings to discuss fisheries-based thematic issues and provide advice and work with Fisheries Commission for improved fisheries governance in the respective regions.

He added that the focus of FWG include the management of the small pelagic stocks, which are most important to food security and employment but are near collapse. Je noted that the priority for the FWGs would include to support the implementation of the Fisheries Management Plan (2015 to 2019) especially the closed season, co-management and reduction of fishing effort.



Figure 3. Mr. Kwadwo Kyei Yamoah giving a presentation on the overview of the SFMP and FWG at one of the regional meetings.

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN (NFMP)

The presentation on the National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP) was made by Mr. Kyei Yamoah of FoN. In his presentation he explained to participants that Section 42 (1) of the Fisheries Act of 2002 (Act 625) mandates the Fisheries Commission to prepare Management Plans for the Fisheries Sector.

Mr. Yamoah's presentation explained that the NFMP has a goal to rebuild fish stock to enhance the socio-economic conditions of fishing communities, create employment within national and international framework and standards and improve food security as well as contribute to GDP and foreign exchange earnings.

He added that the purpose of the plan is also to provide a strategic framework for reversing the declining trend of fish resources and establish a sound management regime to ensure that fish stocks are exploited sustainably in an enhanced environment. He noted that some of the key objectives of the plan include to:

- Reduce the excessive pressure on Fish stock.
- Ensure that fish stock within the marine water of Ghana are exploited within biological acceptable levels.
- Ensure the effective fisheries legislation is implemented to protect The Nation's fish resources.
- Protect the marine habitats and biodiversity.
- Contribute to enhancing export opportunities and strengthening value addition.
- Strengthen participatory decision making in fisheries management (co-management).
- Meet regional and international obligations in the fisheries management.

Mr. Yamoah explained that some of the measures proposed in the NFMP to reduce excessive fishing effort by trawlers included the following:

- Reduction in fishing days for trawlers (to be scaled annually) to 50% reduction in fishing days over the duration of the plan.
- Deletion of inactive boats (trawlers).
- Implementation of Closed Season for trawlers from two months to up to 4 to 6 month by the end of 2019.
- Cancellation of licenses for IUU violators of fisheries laws and regulations (All).
- Replacement scheme for registered vessels (t) (one new vessel to replace two old ones).

He also explained that the NFMP proposed the following measures for Artisanal (Canoes).

- Control new entrants to the fisheries (registration of all existing canoes & capping the entry with no new canoe allowed for the duration of the NFMP).
- Introduction of Additional Fishing Holiday to add to the existing traditional no fishing holiday to make 2 holidays in a week.
- Implementing of co-management for the artisanal sector.
- Modernization of the Fleets (introduce fiberglass, steel boats, etc) to replace old wooden canoes.
- Promoting community group involvement in post-harvest and facilitating business opportunities.
- Implementation of Insurance and Pension Scheme.

Mr. Yamoah, concluding on this presentation explained that the NFMP could be reviewed annually with a management operational committee formed to run the plan backed with a financial plan. He advised that the onus lies on all stakeholders to play active role for the successful implementation of the plan.

The following were questions that arose from the discussions:

Table 1. Questions after presentation

Question & Comments	Answers & Recommendations
Which Fishers are affected by the closed season	The closed season is for trawlers and industrial vessels. since canoe fishers already have one traditional holiday. The canoe fishers are also encouraged to add one additional day to their already existing traditional holiday to make two holidays in a week.
How can the closed season be enforced	The NFMP also proposes additional sea patrols and use of VMS to track compliance of the closed season. Also during the closed season the FEU conducts special sea patrols and inspections at the beach to ensure that trawlers are not fishing.
Most fishers are not aware of the provisions in the NFMP, this is one of the reasons implementation is weak, what could be done.	There is the urgent need for extensive communication of the content of the NFMP and the roles of stakeholders. MOFAD and the Fisheries Commission have to lead this communication effort.
The existing traditional holidays are not uniform in some are it is Tuesday, in other areas it is Sundays or Thursdays or Wednesdays, etc. will this not affect implementation.	The need to have two uniform fishing holidays across the entire coast of Ghana to avoid potential conflict, confusion and promote compliance among fishermen is very important. However, the plan proposed that the selection of the additional holiday will be done in consultation with the local fisherfolks. So the fisherfolks have a say.
What are the roles of Traditional leaders in the implementation of the NFMP.	The implementation of the traditional holiday will require the active support of traditional leaders. Therefore, there is the need to involve traditional leaders in the selection and implementation of the traditional fishing holidays in the respective regions.
Most fishers are not aware of this moratorium / capping for new canoes, because of this the implementation will be a major problem.	The need for extensive communication on moratorium on entry of canoe for the marine fisheries in all regions to promote compliance.
There are some canoes yet to be registered, all the existing canoes must be registered before the	There is need for FC to conduct mop-up exercise to register all remaining canoes before the date is set for moratorium on new entry of canoes for marine fisheries as part of the NFMP implementation.

Question & Comments	Answers & Recommendations
moratorium begins or this will result in major resistance by some of the fishers.	There is the need for FC to train local sign writers to support the embossment of the canoes. Fishermen could also conduct census of all unregistered canoes in their respective communities and communicate to Fisheries Commission to support canoe registration process.
What alternative livelihoods are available to be adopted during resting days of artisanal fishers	Alternative livelihoods could be discussed among the fishers themselves but no to be imposed on them. This will help address the issue efficiently.



Figure 4. A picture of cross section of participants discussing the NFMP at one of the meetings.

EXPERIENCE SHARING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NFMP

At the various meetings participants shared their observation and experience on the implementation of the NFMP. Representatives from: Fisheries Commission, Fisheries Enforcement Unit (FEU), Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) and National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA) shared comments and observation on the the implementation fo the NFMP.

Comments and Observation from Fisheries Commission on the NFMP Implementation

The Regional Directors and officers of the Fisheries Commission from the various coastal Regions presented their observations on the NFMP implementation at the various meetings. They observed that the closed season for example had been successful and they explained that there were indications that the closed season was contributing to increase fish landing for the artisanal fishers.

Mr. Sabah the Regional Director of the Western Region Fisheries Commission explained at one of the meetings that the continual stress imposed on the fish stock by increased effort has led to the current decline in fish stocks. He explained that “the closed season helps gravid fishes to release and hatch eggs into fingerlings which becomes adults and help replenish what is been removed through fishing. He noted that the closed season might seem unfavourable in a shorter period but in the longer term will be very beneficial’. He urged local fishers to be very observant during closed season periods for infractions and report the same to the regulators.



Figure 5. A picture with Mr. Alex Sabah, sharing his observation on the NFMP implementation at the Western Region Meeting

Comments from Fisheries Enforcement Unit (FEU) on the NFMP Implementation.

The representatives of the FEU revealed that they ensured that the closed season was effectively enforced. They explained that the FEU monitored the VMS to ensure that trawling vessels were not fishing during the closed season. They noted that some vessels were observed on the VMS monitor moving from Ghana to Ivory Coast to do fishing during the closed season because they have license. The FEU explained that to prevent such vessels from fishing in Ghana, a minimum of 36 hours were devoted per week for sea patrols by the FEU to monitor the vessels at sea. The FEU revealed that they also monitored the vessels that had bad VMS signals or vessels that showed a possible malfunctioning of their VMS. They indicated that such vessels were called back to port to check the actual problem with their VMS.

The FEU reps shared that all trawling vessels were complying with the closed season and therefore no trawler has been arrested for fishing during the closed season.

The FEU entreated the local fishers to support the FEU monitor trawlers activities during the closed season by reporting any suspected trawling by any vessel.



Figure 6. A picture with Representatives of FEU making presenting their observation of closed season implementation at the Western Region Meeting.