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# SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

## Planning Meeting for Pra Estuary Fisheries Co-Management Plan Implementation



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THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND  
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**Friends of the Nation**

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**Cover photo:** Cross section of participants at the planning meeting (**Credit:** Philip Prah, FoN)

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## **ACRONYMS**

FoN	Friends of the Nation
IEC	Information Education and Communication
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URI-CRC	University of Rhode Island-Coastal Resources Center
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Pra community-based fishery management plan was design to manage the fishery in the lower Pra estuary and its associated wetlands, which covers a total area of 3,190 hectares including mangrove and wetland habitats. The co-management plan was developed because of demand from stakeholders, especially local communities' and traditional leaders through a participatory manner involving all eleven communities and relevant institutions. The process was facilitated by Friends of the Nation with funding support from the USAID SFMP.

Implementation of the co-management plan began in early 2018, however series of action planning meetings were held in the months of October and November 2018 to ensure the successful continuous implementation of the plan.

The planning and review meetings included small meetings by the committee members and expanded meetings with representatives of the 11 communities.

The implementation action provided the platform for stakeholders to evaluate the management actions implemented including the closed season and closed area.

The meetings also created the platform for the committee members to:

- Agree on key monitoring indicators that will be used to monitor the impact of the management actions including: Closed season, closed area, Net regulation, Mangrove health, etc.
- Agree to conduct outreach events to promote good practices and improve communication for implementation of actions in the Co-management plan.
- Plan and implement management actions including; Closed Season, closed area, Net regulation and Mangrove health monitoring.

Successful implementation of the Pra fisheries co-management plan is expected to sustain the livelihood of about 300 fishermen who depend directly on the tilapia fishery in the estuary and also benefit indirectly about 10,000 people including women and children who depend on other goods and services provided by the estuary.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

The draft Pra co-management plan was developed by eleven communities, who collaborated to prove that common pool natural resources can be efficiently managed if there is effective engagement and active participation. Friends of the Nation (FoN), under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) facilitated the process. The SFMP is a five-year project (2014 -2019) with the goal of rebuilding targeted marine fish stocks that have seen major declines in landings over the last decade, particularly the small pelagic fisheries that are important for food security and are the mainstay of the small-scale fishing sector. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Centre (URI-CRC) together with a consortium of partners including FoN, a socio-environmental advocacy non-governmental Organization (NGO). The implementation team uses integrated suite of activities, which seek to ensure that there is

- Improved legal enabling conditions for implementing co-management use rights, capacity and effort-reduction strategies.
- Improved information systems and science-informed decision-making
- Increased constituencies that provides the political will and public support necessary to make the hard choices and changed behavior needed to rebuild Ghana's marine



fisheries sector, feeding into applied management initiatives for targeted fisheries ecosystems.

- Implementation of applied management initiatives for several targeted fisheries ecosystems

### **3.0 DETAIL SESSION**

On October 25, 2018, selected committee members representing the Pra Estuary Fisheries Co-Management Group met to plan the next steps of implementation of their drafted plan. The meeting began with an opening prayer by a committee member. The chair then informed the house of the previous engagement the committee had prior to this meeting. He informed that the committee had planned to organize a monthly meeting since the opening of the closed season in August 2018. He nonetheless informed the house that in the interim, he and two other executives had gone to the bank to initiate discussions on an account opening the group had planned earlier. On the outcome of the bank discussions, he hinted that the bank had requested for a letter of introduction, constitution of the group and utility bill of the proposed signatories. To this, the chair indicated that he has made the letter available to the bank.

Eleven (11) committee members attended the meeting with four others absent.



**Figure 1. Chairman of the fisheries co-management committee giving account of the state of the committee**

#### **The Day's Agenda**

The committee discussed the set of activities spelt out in the management plan. They selected which activity could be applicable for the year 2019, and then ranked them in order of



practicability. They also discussed and agreed on periods of implementation. The outcome of these discussions is summarized in table 1 below.

They planned to meet monthly as committee members and quarterly to report to the advisory stakeholder group for technical directions and assistance. They also decided to submit a copy the constitution of the group to the bank and further go ahead to open a bank account in the name of the committee. Towards the end of the year 2019, the group also intends on reviewing the plan should need be.



**Figure 2: The committee members being taken through the planned activities in the co-management plan for effective discussions and planning**

**Table 1: Summary of discussion during the planning meeting**

Management Objectives	Measures	Specific Action	Ranking	Period of implementation
<b>Biological</b> Restore Tilapia fishery and capture large sized Tilapia using large mesh sized nets	Sustainable harvesting of Tilapia	Nets with mesh size of 2 Inches and above will be used to harvest Tilapia, instead of using 1 inch	1	January to December 2019
		Harvesting small sized tilapia is prohibited		
	Permanent and Temporary Closure of selected breeding grounds	Outright ban of mosquito nets and beach seine nets in the estuary	Not selected (NA) for	Completed for 2018. Same areas will be used for 2019. Painted

Management Objectives	Measures	Specific Action	Ranking	Period of implementation
		Mount sign posts near permanent and seasonal closed areas	ranking because actions were initiated in 2018 and will continue in 2019	bamboos will be replaced as and when necessary
<b>Ecological</b> Improve the habitat quality for fishery resources to thrive	Restore the ecological health and functioning of mangrove ecosystems in the Pra estuarine area	Nurse and plant mangrove seedlings within and around identified spawning sites as well as along banks of the Pra River as far as 50m off the river banks	3	January to March, 2019
		Regulate mangrove harvesting by establishing quotas	2	January – June, 2019
		Mark poles and erect at vantage points to indicate no-go zones for mangrove harvesters		
		Collaborate with Universities and researchers to assess water quality and monitor ecological conditions/health of the wetlands	NA	
<b>Socio-Economic</b> Improve living standards for local fishers	Enhance profitability of the Tilapia	Identify partners that can help develop diversified livelihoods.	5	May – July, 2019
		Work with UCC researchers to determine size limits for the tilapia	NA	
		Work with UCC and Fisheries Commission to monitor and compare size difference of the Tilapia over time especially after	NA	

Management Objectives	Measures	Specific Action	Ranking	Period of implementation
		observing closed seasons for some time.		
	Promotion of good practices through outreach events	Design and produce Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials on good estuarine fishing	NA	
		Periodic briefings with advisory group and communities on status of implementation of measures and discuss challenges	6	Quarterly
<b>Capacity Development</b> Develop capacities of local communities in a way that will promote sustained ecosystem management	Build institutional linkages and nested governance mechanisms for the management of the area.	Improve cordiality and formalize relationship between the local fishers in all the communities and their immediate government – the Shama District Assembly as well as other agencies including Fisheries Commission, Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, and Environmental Protection Agency	NA	
		Strengthen local communities' active participation in decision making on sustainable fisheries management	4	January – March, 2019
		Annually review this co-management plan with communities	7	December 2019

## **4.0 NEXT STEPS**

At the end of the planning meeting, the committee agreed on the following next steps:

- Repeating the successfully implemented closed season in 2019
- Replication of closed season implementation in other fertile breeding grounds
- Submit a copy of the constitution of the group to the bank to facilitate bank account opening
- Signatories to the bank account to go and sign at the bank