



# SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Radio sensitization and education on  
Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated (IUU)  
Fishing



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**Cover photo:** Participants at Obunu FM (**Credit:** Development Association)

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## **ACRONYMS**

DAA	Development Action Association
FC	Fisheries Commission
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The rate of unapproved methods of fishing in some parts of the landing beaches in Ghana is beyond control. The fishermen at the Winneba and Apam landing beaches use unapproved means and methods of fishing. This has contributed to depletion and over exploitation of fish stock in the marine waters of Ghana. Due to the prevalence of IUU Fishing in Ghana, the Fisheries Management Plan of Ghana was introduced as a National Policy for the management of the marine fisheries sector. The implemental and operational period of the plan was from 2015 to 2019. For the public to be aware and know the state of fishing in the country, the Development Action Association under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project had public sensitization and awareness creation on the Management plan in the form of radio discussion.

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

Illegal fishing adversely impacts legitimate commercial fishers as well as fish populations. Illegal fishers avoid overhead costs, such as licenses. They fish without the constraints accepted by legal fishers, often falsify documentation and effectively 'launder' their ill-gotten catch. Illegal fishers' actions constitute a clear case of unfair competition since they operate without the costs of doing business legally or the strictures of following established policies and laws.

Also, because illegal fishers do not report their catch, their fishing activities affect the accuracy of official fish catch and stock estimates. This adversely impacts how fisheries is managed because regulatory bodies use reported catches and stock estimates to set catch limits and otherwise manage fish populations. Thus, because the real volume of fish caught is unknown, it is very difficult to effectively manage fisheries where illegal fishing is taking place.

Finally, illegal fishing often causes grave environmental damage especially when vessels use prohibited gear, such as driftnets that catches non-target species (like sharks, turtles or dolphins) or physically damages or destroys reefs, seamounts and other vulnerable marine ecosystems.

## **1.1 Objectives of the Radio Discussion**

- Sensitize fisher folks on the state of fishing in Ghana.
- For people to be aware of the negative effects of illegal fishing in the country.
- To protect marine habitats and bio-diversity.
- To strengthen participatory decision making in fisheries management.
- To reduce the excessive pressure on fish stocks.

## **1.2 Expected Outcomes**

- Rebuild fish stocks to enhance the socio-economic conditions of fishing communities.
- Create employment within national and international frameworks and standards.
- Improve food security as well as contribute to the GDP and foreign exchange earnings.

## **2. SYNOPSIS FOR RADIO DISCUSSION**

### **What is IUU?**

"IUU" stands for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. IUU fishing includes all fishing that breaks fisheries laws or occurs outside the reach of fisheries laws and regulations. Blast fishing or dynamite fishing is the practice of using explosives to stun or kill schools of fish for easy collection. This often-illegal practice can be extremely destructive to the surrounding ecosystem, as the explosion often destroys the underlying habitat (such as coral reefs) that supports the fish.

### **How does overfishing affect the environment?**

If caught, they are eventually discarded either at the sea or shore. Overfishing can have adverse effect on marine biodiversity. Overfishing can wreak havoc, destroy the environment and marine ecology; and completely disrupt the food chain.

### **Why is overfishing happening?**

Overfishing occurs because fish are captured at a faster rate than they can reproduce. Advanced fishing technologies and an increased demand for fish have led to overfishing, causing several marine species to become extinct or endangered.

### **Is all IUU fishing a crime?**

No. While many IUU fishing activities are crimes – for example, fishing without a license or in a prohibited area – others are not (such as the unregulated high-seas fishing discussed above). But other criminal activities are often associated with unregulated activity. These include the forging of catch or import/export documents and ships' logs so that catch can be sold in key markets, and particularly in Europe and North America.

### **What are the impacts of illegal fishing?**

Illegal fishing adversely impacts legitimate commercial fishers as well as fish populations. Illegal fishers avoid overhead costs, such as licenses. Also, because illegal fishers do not report catch, their fishing activities affect the accuracy of official fish catch and stock estimates.

### **Why should you care about illegal fishing?**

You should care about illegal fishing because it threatens the health and therefore the availability of wild-caught fish, a basic source of protein for almost 3 billion people around the world.

### **What are the causes of illegal fishing?**

Illegal fishing is an economic crime driven by a growing world demand for fish and other seafood, and the globalization of the market. Some fishers skirt the law in pursuit of higher catch, taking advantage of patchy regulation of the commercial fishing industry and poor enforcement regimes at sea.

**What is the relationship with postharvest improvements and unsustainable fishery practices (IUU)? How are you working with Fisheries Commission (FC) to improve the postharvest sector in Ghana? What are the main challenges, treats and opportunities in the postharvest value chain in Ghana fisheries sector? In your opinion, how can postharvest value chain improvements contribute to Ghana's sustainable fishery?**



### **3. PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND PHONE-INS**

Images from the discussion and phone-in.



**Figure 1. Mr. Anthony Appiah, Zonal fisheries commissioner, at Radio Windy Bay educating fishermen on IUU and Fisheries law**



**Figure 2. Madam Mercy Frimpong at Radio Windy Bay, Winneba sensitizing the people on IUU Fishing**



**Figure 3. Madam Florence Nartey at Radio Peace in Winneba, sensitizing fisher folks on the effects of illegal fishing to the society**



**Figure 4. Madam Emelia Nortey, Centre Manager of DFTC at Obonu FM in Tema, educating and sensitizing fisher folks on the effects of IUU fishing in Ghana**

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

It was recommended that more radio discussions on the Fisheries Management Plan should be done on weekly basis throughout the country. Also, television and information centers should be used to broadcast the message to large number of people.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

A relook at issues of IUU has become important as all organizations and agencies working in the fisheries sector need to come onboard to tackle the menace. If fishermen bring unwholesome fish, it affects our health; and the broader economic impact is the risk of the ban from the EU.

To strengthen corrective measures instituted by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, USAID has committed funds in a 5-year fisheries sustenance project called the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) to protect fisheries livelihood.

The project seeks to collaborate with key fishery stakeholders, smallholder fishery associations, the Fisheries Commission among other partners, to address the challenges of overfishing and unsustainable fishing practices such as IUU fishing, low compliance and weak capacity for law enforcement within this sector. The project hopes to strengthen the capacity of fishery associations to engage in equitable fisheries governance and promote the safeguarding of livelihood for vulnerable smallholder fishers.