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CO-MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AS VEHICLES TO RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES IN THE INLAND WATERS OF AFRICA

SUMMARY

The paper highlights the importance of co-management arrangements in promoting responsible fisheries in inland waters in West Africa. Using the example of the Inland Waters Pilot Project of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP), the paper also brings out the key issues and challenges to address for improving the effectiveness of co-management arrangements in inland waters particularly when these bodies are characterized, like most inland waters in Africa, by a diversity of multi-aquatic systems subjected to multiple uses by a range of stakeholders with diverse interests. The benefits of responsible fisheries through co-management are many, although co-management can be one of three broad arrangements with variable effectiveness. The paper notes the present contributions of the SFLP to responsible inland fisheries management, as well as the need inter-alia to enhance stakeholder participation and capacity building, and for effective and transparent mechanisms for sharing the benefits and costs of lake fisheries co-management

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper highlights the importance of co-management arrangements in promoting responsible fisheries in inland waters in West Africa, using the example of the Inland Waters Pilot Project of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP). It also brings out the key issues and challenges to address for improving the effectiveness of co-management arrangements in inland waters.

2. For this, the paper briefly defines the concept of responsible fisheries, particularly in relation to fisheries management in inland waters. Management arrangements are then explained in terms of the relative participation of stakeholders in decision-making and of their role in enabling responsible fisheries to produce desired outcomes. This is followed by an illustration of some of the deliveries of the Inland Waters Pilot Project of the SFLP in support of responsible fisheries with a view to bring out key issues and challenges in furthering the aims of responsible fisheries through co-management arrangements.

RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

3. The concept of responsible fisheries is developed in the international Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) adopted by FAO in 1995¹. The CCRF is a voluntary instrument that provides principles and standards for ensuring the long-term use of living aquatic resources. These principles and standards, applicable to the conservation, management and development of all fisheries, are directed to all fisheries stakeholders including governments, non-governmental organizations, fisheries agents and their groups.

4. In effect, the CCRF provides guidance for the attainment of responsible fisheries practices, a concept which “encompasses the sustainable utilization of fishery resources in harmony with the environment; the use of capture and aquaculture practices which are not harmful to ecosystems, resources and their quality; the incorporation of added value to such products through processing to meet the required sanitary standards; the conduct of commercial practices to provide consumers access to good quality products”².

5. To promote the application of this concept at national, regional and international levels in all aspects of fisheries, including inland fisheries, the FAO has, in collaboration with other key stakeholders, developed technical guidelines. In the case of inland fisheries, the principles of the technical guidelines include the following:

“States and users of living aquatic resources should conserve aquatic ecosystems. The right to fish carries with it the obligation to do so in a responsible manner so as to ensure effective conservation and management of the living aquatic resources.

Fisheries management should promote the maintenance of the quality, diversity and availability of fishery resources in sufficient quantities for present and future generations in the context of food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Management measures should not only ensure the conservation of target species but also of species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with or dependent upon the target species. The harvesting, handling, processing and distribution of fish and fishery products should be carried out in a manner which will maintain the nutritional value, quality and safety of the products, reduce waste and minimize negative impacts on the environment³.”

¹ FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Rome. FAO 1995

² International Conference on Responsible Fishing, Cancun, Mexico, 1992

³ FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries No. 6.

RELEVANCE OF RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES IN INLAND WATERS

6. Inland waters in Africa are characterized by a diversity of aquatic systems, which are being subjected to multiple uses by a range of stakeholders with diverse interests. As a part of the inland waters, inland fisheries in the SFLP member countries have peculiarities which include:

- **Diverse aquatic systems:** A wide range of aquatic environments (including swamps/flood plains, rivers, dams, lakes, reservoirs, lagoons and estuaries) in the SFLP member countries provide the basis for inland fisheries, which give rise to a diversity of fisheries types.
- **Multi-purpose uses of inland waters:** Inland waters are characterized by multiple uses, including production of electricity, navigation, wetland reclamation for agriculture, urbanization, water extraction and transfer, fishing and waste disposal. Non-fishery activities are dominant and their negative external impacts and regulations constrain conservation, management and sustainable development of inland fisheries. In effect, the control of the inland fishery resource is shared between non-fishery and fishery sectors. Implied is the presence of conflict and the need to accommodate trade-offs among the interests of the different users.
- **Diversity of stakeholders;** Inland aquatic ecosystems in the sub-region are predominantly being exploited by numerous small-scale fishing operators including commercial, part-timers and subsistence fisheries actors. A variety of fishing gears and methods are in use often resulting in conflicts. Most of the inland fisheries resource users in the sub-region are part of the poorest and vulnerable groups. The other uses of these ecosystems lead to the existence of multiple stakeholders and diverging interests requiring a sharing of rights and responsibilities for the sustainability of development.
- **Contributions to food security and livelihoods;** The inland fisheries sub-sector is an important contributor to food security and a source of livelihoods in the sub-region, especially for the poorest and vulnerable groups.

7. To ensure the sustainability of benefits from inland fisheries, the CCRF stresses the need for responsible management, which takes into consideration the interdependencies implied above and actively involves the appropriate key stakeholders in decision making processes.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CO-MANAGEMENT

8. The principles of responsible fisheries imply some form of co-management as an institutional model. There are, however, different types of co-management arrangements, denoting degrees of sharing of responsibility and authority in governing the aquatic resources among multi-stakeholders (government and development agencies, resource users, and others). On the basis of the resource users-government control grid of participation in decision making, five broad types of management arrangements can be distinguished; instructive, consultative, cooperative, advisory and informative (see table 1).

Table 1 – Typology of management arrangements

<i>Government Leads</i>		<i>User Groups Lead</i>		
Instructive Management centralized in government, providing unilateral instructions to the resource users.	Consultative Government consult users but solely responsible for decision-making; controls the process.	Cooperative Government and users cooperate as equal partners in decision-making.	Advisory Government role is advisory; users advise government on decisions to be taken and government endorses these decisions.	Informative User-group based management; government delegates authority for decision making to users who are responsible for informing government on these decisions.
CO-MANAGEMENT				

Source: Allison E. H & Turay F., 2004. Improvement of the Policies and Institutions for Co-management in Inland Waters in Burkina Faso, Mali, Cote D'Ivoire and Ghana. SFLP Pilot Project 1 Report

9. Co-management (columns 2-4 in Table 1) depicts certain degrees of involvement in decision-making by stakeholders. From the literature, there is no ideal co-management arrangement. Analysis, however, based on the efficiency-equity-sustainability framework, reveals the broad success of cooperative and advisory co-management arrangements and relatively less desirable outcomes of instructive and consultative arrangements.

10. In the inland waters, cooperative and advisory co-management arrangements can provide the following advantages:

- Improved sustenance of natural resource use;
- Citizen empowerment, which is compatible with political democratization and decentralization agendas;
- Improved contributions to food security, livelihood security and incomes;
- Enhanced contribution to poverty eradication by strengthening the capacity and livelihoods of poorer groups;
- Reduced rules and regulation enforcement cost;
- Better management of user conflicts about access to resources.

KEY FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN INLAND FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT

11. As Table 2 shows, there are ‘preconditions and processes for successful co-management outcomes’. In reality, inland fisheries can hardly meet the complete set of

favourable conditions. As a result, the process factors are usually emphasised in promoting the fisheries co-management enterprise.

Table 2. Factors associated with successful co-management

	<u>Preconditions</u>	<u>Processes</u>
<i>Supra-community (national and district level)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling policies, legislation • Livelihood systems able to deal with adverse trends & shocks • External agents of change – facilitation, finance, ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined, realistic goals and objectives agreed among key stakeholders • Stakeholder ownership – transparency of process, shared understanding of different groups claims on the resource • Ensuring institutional ‘fit’ with existing livelihoods, culture, ecology
<i>Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property rights, scale and boundary issues clearly defined • Participation, leadership, local government support, functional community-based organisations • Adequate resources, accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional capacity for implementation -political will, organisational structures, financial viability
<i>Individuals/households</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive structures for participation can be identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable representation

Source: Allison E.H. & Badject Marie-Caroline, 2004. *Fisheries Co-management in Inland Waters : A review of institutional experience. Draft Report.*

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SFLP INLAND WATERS CO-MANAGEMENT PILOT PROJECT TO RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

12. Since 2003, the main contribution of the SFLP to responsible fisheries in the inland waters in the region has been through the implementation of its inland waters co-management pilot project. This contribution will be further enhanced by the post-harvest pilot project.

13. The inland fisheries co-management pilot project, the first of three SFLP pilot projects, is geared to improving fisheries livelihoods by establishment of co-management mechanisms and the integration of fisheries communities into local development. Sustainable participatory management of lake water bodies in place, the project expects to contribute to poverty reduction and livelihoods improvement for communities dependent on five lake water bodies:

- Burkina Faso – Lakes Bagré and Kompienga
- Côte d’Ivoire – Lake Kossou
- Ghana – Lake Volta

14. The inland fisheries co-management pilot project is contributing to responsible fisheries management mainly through the delivery of seven outputs:

- Functional co-management plans for inland water bodies
- Improved policy and legislative framework for co-management
- Improved social and economic benefits to fisheries communities from increased participation in the sector and wider local development processes
- Enhanced capacity of stakeholders at all levels to contribute to co-management and local development
- Sources of finance to sustain co-management systems and community development programmes identified and secured
- Information networks and communications and monitoring systems established to support resource management and the improvement and diversification of livelihoods
- Protecting the environment and the lake resources

15. The presentation to follow illustrates the contribution of output areas of the SFLP inland fisheries pilot to responsible inland fisheries management:

Identifying key lake water body stakeholders and improving their capacities

16. The lake stakeholders in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali were analysed to identify the important and/or influential agents and agencies to participate in developing, implementing and monitoring co-management plans for Lakes Bagré, Kompienga, Selingé and Volta. This process is on-going for Lake Kossou in Cote d'Ivoire.

17. In general, the lake stakeholders include government agencies (departments of fisheries agriculture and rural development), hydro-electric power authorities (Volta River Authority, Maître d'Ouvrage, Mali Energie in Ghana, Burkina and Mali respectively), local administrations, fishers (including the migrants), fish processors and marketing agents, other development projects and Non-governmental organisations (including lake community-based organisations).

18. Although representatives of most of these stakeholders took part in the design of the pilot project, the lake stakeholders have been further sensitised to raise their knowledge and understanding of the pilot project content and process, as well as of the processes of lake fisheries co-management planning and implementation.

19. To improve effectiveness of stakeholder participation in fisheries management planning and implementation and in wider development processes, selected stakeholders, in particular the primary pilot project beneficiaries received training in organisational development, aquatic resource management and participatory monitoring of changes in community livelihoods.

20. To raise the literacy, especially among women and other marginalized lake fishing community groups, functional literacy training was initiated for fishing communities on lake Bagré and Kompienga (Burkina Faso), and lake Selingué (Mali), and planned for lake Volta (Ghana). In Burkina Faso and Mali 89 (overwhelmingly women) and 35 (29 men and 6 women) benefited respectively from the literacy training.

21. The project, through awareness-raising campaigns among the lake stakeholders, also continued to improve the level of understanding of the principles of the Sustainable livelihoods and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, as well as of on-going changes in national legislations and institutional reforms affecting community-based organisations and associations.

22. With improving capacity, the lake stakeholders are better appreciating the importance of their individual respective roles in responsibly managing their lake resources. Furthermore, there has been an increasing level of participation of marginalized groups (eg women, fisher-without capital assets) in discussing lake community and wider development issues. For example informal lake fisheries community associations on Lakes Bagré, Kompienga and Selingé initiated the processes of obtaining their respective legal status, leading already to the full legal recognition some of them.

23. Lake stakeholders are participating in the processes of setting up of lake community-based participatory systems, which will enable them to monitor the performance of their respective lake fisheries co-management plans and changes in their livelihoods. In Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali, the processes have produced draft monitoring frameworks, and indicators and their sources. The sets of indicators are being revised.

Improving policy and legislative framework for co-management

24. Towards improving the understanding of decisions-makers of the socio-economic importance of fisheries (inland and marine) in national and local poverty reduction and in economic growth, the project initiated a study in each of the four pilot countries. This study when completed will generate information on the role of lake inland fisheries in livelihoods improvement, poverty reduction and economic growth, as well as lessons for improving the SFLP practical guide on assessing the social and economic contributions of fisheries.

25. The project has been contributing to improving national policy processes (including fisheries planning, poverty reduction planning, rural development and decentralization) through ensuring the participation of marginalized stakeholder groups like lake fisherfolk and incorporating certain aspects of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

26. In Burkina Faso, the project provided comments to and facilitated the participation of representatives of lake fishing communities in the processes of formulating national fisheries management and rural development strategies. Lakes Bagré and Kompienga fishing communities also improved their participation in the processes of reviewing the national poverty reduction strategy and of the on-going decentralization process. The project also supported the review of relevant legislations and regulations (concerning the creation and operation of “périmètres aquacoles d’intérêt économique; Unités de Gestion) to make them compatible with participatory lake management. The revised texts were submitted for the endorsement of the Government.

27. In Ghana, the participatory review of the draft inland fisheries policy implicated the key stakeholders and produced improved versions of the policy document, incorporating the principles of the Code of Conduct for responsible Fisheries and Sustainable Livelihoods. This revised policy document will be further improved through a planned national stakeholders workshop before facilitating its adoption by all the key stakeholders. With support from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the project is also sensitizing the lake fisheries communities on the prevailing fisheries laws.

28. In Mali, the participatory review of the draft local fisheries by-laws and regulations, involving all the key lake stakeholders, produced revised versions, which are CCRF and participatory co-management compatible. The revised final document of the local fisheries by-laws, approved and adopted by all the key lake stakeholders (including the Mali government, local administration and fisherfolk), has been translated into the common local language “bamanan” on the lake and is being disseminated and being gradually applied. Through awareness-raising campaigns, lake fishing communities are improving their participation in the on-going Malian decentralization processes.

Improving institutional framework

29. Taking into consideration the relevant national laws, national frameworks were established for creating the structures to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of the performance of the lake fisheries co-management plan in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali.

30. While awaiting the adoption by Government of the legal framework and legislative texts for the creation of the fisheries management entities in Burkina Faso, the project facilitated the creation of functional interim fisheries management committees – one for each lake. These Committees facilitated the discussions aimed at minimizing the negative consequences of the overlapping functions of the Ministry in-Charge of fisheries and that of the Environment on the livelihoods of the lake fishing communities.

31. In Ghana, three District lake fisheries management committees have been formed while the mechanisms for electing the members of the community-based lake fisheries management committees were been put in place.

32. In Mali, the process of setting up of the lake fisheries management committees (“Conseils pêche) was nearing completion. The members of four of the planned fisheries management committees have already been elected.

Developing and implementing participatory co-management plans for responsible lake fisheries management

33. The participatory management planning process initiated by each of the country Project Management Team, ensured the effective involvement of the key project stakeholders (state (central, local), non-state, fisheries organisations, fishers (employers, employees), women fish processors (asset owners, non-asset owners, fish traders, youths) in the development (including diagnosis, formulation and review) of draft lake co-management plans.

34. In effect, the participatory review processes have led to improved versions of the lake co-management plans of Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali, incorporating the concerns and comments of the key stakeholders of the concerned lakes (Bagré, Kompienga, Volta and Selingué) and experiences from the on-going implementation of some of the planned activities. While in Mali, the lake Selingué fisheries co-management plan has been validated in a national stakeholders workshop, similar national stakeholders workshops have been planned for Burkina Faso and Ghana.

35. In Ghana, where there was a fisheries co-management plan for lake Volta before the start of the project, the review process ensured the participation of all the key stakeholders, including women and other disadvantageous groups. It has also enabled the lake stakeholders

to develop action plans – two such action plans for the Northern and Eastern regions of lake Volta have been formulated, and are being used to solicit funding for the implementation of the Volta lake fisheries co-management plan.

Protecting the environment and the lake resources

36. In Burkina Faso and Mali, strategies for the participatory enhancement and/or protection of the resources and environments of Lakes Bagré, Kompienga and Selingué are being implemented.

37. In Burkina Faso, the four lake communities with established management committees for protecting the lake environment/banks initiated a tree planting scheme - 10 000 seedlings have already been planted during present season. A stakeholder-based action experiment has also been undertaken in Burkina Faso to determine the most appropriate gear for the selective targeting of certain under-exploited lake fish species.

38. Following the identification of threats to the lake environment and natural resources in Mali, a community action plan was developed for reducing the key threats to the lake community livelihoods. Furthermore, while two lake communities planted trees to protect lake banks, a corridor of the Lake Selingué (measuring 32 km (long) by 25km (wide)) was cleared of tree stumps to improve navigation and safety at sea. The project also provided material support to facilitate the monitoring of the quality of Lake Selingué water in Mali.

39. In Ghana, the project has initiated the process of bringing together key Lake Volta stakeholders like the Volta River Authority, local and central administrations, development projects and lake communities to address the issues of environmental degradation along the banks of the lake.

Improving social and economic benefits to fisheries communities from increased participation in the sector and wider local development processes

40. Towards improving the social and economic benefits to fisheries communities, the project sensitized the lake fishing communities on available opportunities and their conditions of access (micro-finance and public development funds), and potential development partnerships on the need for their services and facilities in lake fishing communities. The project used participation in partnership discussion forum to advocate on behalf of the lake fishing communities. The increasing participation of lake fishing communities in local development processes also increased their awareness of the availability of other development opportunities such as social funds and Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) resources.

41. In Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, the project facilitated the establishment of the links between lake fishing communities and micro-finance institutions. As a result, fisherfolk improved their access to former credit and savings services and facilities – on Lake Kossou (Cote d'Ivoire). Thirty fishers and fish traders on lake Kossou recently opened formal savings accounts and one fishers' organization obtained a group credit of 2 million CFA francs.

42. In the case of Burkina Faso, 17 women obtained micro-credit during the first half of 2004 compared to 58 in 2003. The project, in partnership with another development project, also worked with two fishing communities to improve their access to clean water. In support of livelihoods diversification, the project is developing a participatory strategy for the exploitation of under-exploited fish species on Lakes Bagré and Kompinga.

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43. In Mali, the project team is working closely with two key development projects with credit components to improve the delivery of credit and savings services and facilities to Lake Selingué fishing communities.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

44. As experiences from elsewhere show, transforming state-based management to co-management is often a long and difficult process⁴. In promoting responsible fisheries management in inland fisheries within the SFLP context, the emerging key issues and challenges include the following:

- **Addressing the unequal power sharing among lake stakeholders:** As revealed by the project's lake stakeholder analysis and participatory poverty profiling, the lake stakeholders are multiple with unequal distribution of power. The lake fisherfolk, the primary beneficiaries of the project, are the most disadvantaged in terms of the attributes of power. Although the project is improving their individual and collective capacities, their relative lack of power most often limit their effective participation in the co-management processes.
- **Sustaining support of government and other powerful stakeholders:** Although governments have been very supportive during the development of the lake fisheries co-management plans and the relevant fisheries legislations and laws, sustaining this level of support will not be without difficulties during actual devolution of power to the lake fisheries management entities. National fisheries administrations may need help to ensure timely and smooth devolution of power as well in preparing for the new responsibilities which this change might entail. Action should also be taken to mitigate and monitor the resistance of powerful non-government stakeholders.
- **Developing effective mechanisms for ensuring equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of lake fisheries co-management:** The costs of lake fisheries co-management entail management and its negative impacts on the livelihoods of certain stakeholders, who may have to decrease their dependence on fisheries as a source of livelihoods. While benefits from co-management can easily attract stakeholders, mostly leading to the dominance of elite groups, costs on the contrary tend to drive them away. Transparent mechanisms need to be put in place to provide incentives to lake stakeholders to pay for co-management and for some to accept the negative consequences of co-management, as well as to ensure that the disadvantaged groups benefit from co-management. In mitigating the negative effects of the adoption of lake fisheries co-management on livelihood strategies, the project is proposing diversification of livelihood enterprises. This strategy is sometimes limited by the relative inaccessibility of bankable alternative enterprises.
- **Building trust and self-confidence among the key lake stakeholders, especially the poorer fisherfolk:** This is needed to ensure effective participation, particularly

⁴ Allison E.H. & Badject Marie-Caroline, 2004. Fisheries Co-management in Inland Waters : A review of institutional experience. Draft Report: Wilson D.C. et al. 2003. The Fisheries co-management experience : Accomplishments, Challenges and Prospects. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press

of the disadvantageous groups, and effective management of fisheries conflicts. The project improved the attendance of the marginalized groups in lake community meetings, but there is a wide scope for improving the effectiveness of their participation. The limited self confidence of lake fisherfolk often limits their capacity to take responsibility. For example, for fear of being blamed for the cause of other community members' poverty, fisherfolk on one of the project lakes refused to have a representation in a newly constituted committee for administering formal credit. Lake stakeholders are multiple with diverse interests, a basis for conflicts especially for groups with little or no trust for each other.

- **Incorporating migrant fisherfolk in co-management:** Both internal and external migration of lake fisherfolk is a common phenomenon. Although migrant fisherfolk provide benefits, they tend to participate less in co-management and other local development processes. Furthermore, migrant fisherfolks tend to be the first victims of distressed lake fisheries. Innovative instruments are therefore needed for the better integration of migrant fisherfolk in lake co-management.
- **Capacity building:** Long term capacity building is needed for the lake fisheries co-management entities (those already in place and being created) to improve their effectiveness in contributing to enhancing the livelihoods of the lake fishing communities.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

45. The Committee is invited to

- review the concept of co-management as a vehicle to responsible fisheries in inland fisheries
- provide respective national experiences
- make recommendations on improving responsible fisheries management in inland waters through co-management, particularly in addressing the challenges identified in the paper