



**EAF-Nansen Project
(GCP/INT/003/NOR)**

Title :	Improving the management of the beach seine fishery in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo
Funded:	EAF-Nansen
Total Contribution:	USD 100,000¹
Countries:	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana et Togo
Duration:	18 months
Estimated date of starting:	July 2010

¹ Each of the 4 participating countries will receive an amount of USD 25,000 to implement its activities.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Beach seine fishery

Beach seining as a fishing method has come under intense criticism in recent times by resource managers, policy makers and environmentalists due to its destructive effects on fisheries resources. The gear, is operated mainly around estuaries and within shallow waters where spawning and breeding of fish occur. This activity reduces the recruitment potential of most fish species especially the small pelagic stocks shared by countries bordering the western Gulf of Guinea. There have been calls for restrictions and in some cases outright ban of beach seines. This action may be beneficial to improve the natural asset of the beach seine communities, but on the other hand, it would increase the vulnerability of these communities to poverty. The catches of small pelagic species and demersal inshore fish originating from beach seining are an important source of protein, and contribute significantly to food security. The beach seine fishery also provides employment and a means of livelihood to most coastal rural folks. It would be necessary to develop initiatives oriented towards maintaining equilibrium between the environmental and socio-economic dynamics of the communities. The environmental management would consist of improving the production mechanisms that would guarantee the sustainable use of the natural resources. The socio-economic management would aim at instituting positive practices to guide the exploitation and utilization of the resources, to satisfy the aspirations of the communities.

1.2. Current status of beach seine management in the concerned countries

Limited attempts were made to manage the beach activities in the four countries and involve mesh size regulation and the ban of the beach seine. In Ghana, coastal communities have been organised into Community-Based Fisheries Management Committees (CBMFC) to check irresponsible fishing through out the coast. There has been a lot of discussion going on about the destructive nature of beach seines and the government's intension to ban them. Attempts to regulate the beach seine activities by the CBFMCs (to control the use of illegal meshes by fishermen and advocacy to stop the importation of under size meshes) have met with little success. To face this situation, the CBMFCs decided to seek support from the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) which funded a small project. The objective of the project was to involve the fisheries communities in the process of setting up regulations for the use of the beach seine. The fishing communities of both Benin and Togo adopted the same strategy. In these two countries the position of fisheries administration tend to regulate the beach seining rather than an outright ban which would disrupt incomes and also may cause political disaffection. In Côte d'Ivoire, a study was conducted in the 1990s primarily focused on the social economy of the artisanal fisheries communities. Fisheries communities are using the beach seine as a fishing gear along the coast. The use of this gear is currently non regulated.

To better understand the environmental and socio-economic dynamics governing the beach seine, a development initiative, the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Project (EAF-Nansen Project) has initiated a baby project in beach seining in Benin, Togo, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. This baby project will provide important information to enable EAF-Nansen Project focal points better contribute to the management of the beach seine fishery in coastal waters and by so doing to the livelihoods of beach seine communities.

2. RATIONALE

2.1 Problems to be addressed

Marine and coastal living resources including fish as a source of rich protein has been the backbone of many rural small-scale fisheries. Increased fishery overexploitation and habitat degradation are threatening the coastal and marine fisheries resources. A typical case is the beach seine fishery which is operated from the shoreline by fishers often dragging nets across the seabed hauling in variety of fish species both adults and juveniles.

The complexity of the fishery revolves around large numbers of fishers (operators), the use of meshes not prescribed under the law, the destruction of the environment (mangroves, and often coconut trees/plantations) and the lack of consistent data and information on the entirety of the fishery including social interactions (population growth, demand for food and poverty). This situation has led to poor quality of available information and national policies based on these are not harmonized. Also, the catches per unit of effort in recent years have been declining in the four countries. The countries share many similarities including problems as regard to beach seine. They are conscious of the fact that cooperation is a major prerequisite to sound management of the beach seine fisheries.

Collaboration to exchange information and experiences to achieve joint policies and regulation is a necessity at sub-regional level. Fisheries resources are hardly confined in national waters as most stocks are shared and distributed in the waters of the four countries. The gears used are similar from one country to another and the fishermen continuously migrate between the four countries with their boats and fishing equipment. Markets are also increasingly common as border trade develops. Although the four countries belong to the Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), real cooperation between themselves in the fisheries sector is still lacking. Therefore, their national institutions should be strengthened to provide the level of cooperation required for the sound management of the fisheries resources including the beach seine.

Other constraints that could jeopardize the success of the process must be addressed. They include: (i) the lack of both human and financial resources (ii) the weak policies and legal framework (iii) the limited experience in the management of shared stocks (iv) insufficient capacity to enable the fisheries communities to better organize and participate in fisheries management and (v) the absence of a system to bring the information at the decision making level.

2.2 Stakeholders and target beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the project are the small-scale fishers involved in beach seining, processors and other stakeholders in the four countries. The secondary beneficiaries are fisheries administrations, partner institutions, regional fisheries organizations such as FCWC and NGOs.

2.3 Justification

Past management systems, based on the conventional catch and fishing effort theory have failed to significantly prevent the continuing decline in catches. The technical, social, environmental and biological interactions in the fisheries have not been fully integrated. In

this regard new concepts are being implemented aiming at integrating the human and environmental dimensions and enabling all stakeholders to participate fully in the processes in order to improve the overall well being of fishermen. For rational and sustainable management, the beach seine fishery ought to comply with this logic.

2.4 Expected Situation at the end of the Project

At the end of the project, both human and institutional capacities for fisheries management in the four countries would be enhanced; countries would have gained experience in cooperation and also the confidence to put in place some harmonized policies to address the beach seine fishery management. In particular, it is anticipated that through this project, the countries would have initiated activities to enable them to elaborate management plans in a participatory way and to monitor the beach seine fishery.

2.5 Project strategy

The project aims at strengthening the management and monitoring systems of the beach seine fishery from a perspective of cooperation between the four countries, which could be later extended to other members of the Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea. The project will be executed on the basis of a process approach, that is, taking into account the dynamic nature of the fisheries sector the proposed activities are not static and could be modified taking into account the prevailing conditions. Research and development are required to address broader management issues and contribute to the elaboration of new or appropriate approaches, methods and policies for fisheries management. Research-development activities will focus on selected common issues of major importance, benefiting from experience gained within and outside the sub-region. Human capacity building, through workshops, on-the job training, mentoring and through the integration of training and research-development activities will be a major consideration of the project. Emphasis will be placed on the active involvement of participants (administration, research, fishery communities, etc.), before and after training sessions to ensure the direct application of acquired knowledge and/or skills. The development of awareness material is also an important process that will enable communities to better understand the situation and to be actively involved in the management of beach seines as key actors. However, considering the time frame and budget available, this activity is not covered by the project but could be supported in the future.

2.6 Institutional arrangements and relationship with other programmes

The Project will be executed by the EAF National Task Groups and Fisheries Administrations. The project will, when appropriate, promote cooperation with international organisations active in the region in fisheries or related matters, such as the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), etc. The resources provided through this project are considered to be the minimum necessary to support the various processes that are essential during the lifespan of the project.

2.7 Past and Related Work

In the four countries concerned, the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) implemented by FAO and funded by DFID (1999-2007) provided financial support for activities to regulate the use of the beach seines. As part of the SFLP project, experiments of

“improved” beach seine were carried out with the fisheries communities in Benin, Togo and Ghana. Some communities have used beach seines with a larger mesh size (20mm to 30mm stretched) to avoid the catch of juveniles. The result of the use of this kind of beach seines showed a decline in catches of juveniles ranging from 30-50% in comparison to beach seines using 10mm mesh, and an increase of large fish and consequently increase in the income of the communities. SFLP has also developed alternative activities such as fishing with gill nets, lines, oyster farming and collection of coconut for the food industry.

We have to mention also the UNIDO/GEF Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project, which also provides the framework and mechanisms for monitoring trans-boundary environmental effects and has also organized training courses and workshops on stock assessment and monitoring control and surveillance for researchers and fisheries administrators of the 16 participating countries, which include the four countries in this project.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of the project is to improve beach seine fisheries management and monitoring of Benin, Togo, Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire, taking into account the principles of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, to promote more responsible resource use and increase socio-economic benefits, and improve the well being of fishing communities. This project is built on the results achieved by the SFLP project on the beach seine in Benin, Togo and Ghana and is part of a continuous process to define in consultation with fishing communities regulations for the use of the beach seines.

4. OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

Output 1: Improved knowledge of issues related to sustainable management of the beach seine fishery

- Activity 1.1 Conduct a study on beach seine fishery to produce a baseline report, including a study/review and evaluation of the meshes used.
- Activity 1.2 Organize a workshop on Ecological Risk assessment (ERA) to identify issues to be solved, analyse risks, prioritize problems, and chose the appropriate management options.
- Activity 1.3 Organize workshops with stakeholders and NTG of other partner countries to share results of the baseline studies and workshops on Ecological Risks Assessment.
- Activity 1.4 Organize a workshop to strengthen and improve the capacities of members of NTG and other stakeholders on the Ecosystem Approach o Fisheries (EAF).

Output 2 Management and Monitoring Plan for beach seine fishery put in place, with an emphasis on resource sustainability and socio-economic performance.

- Activity 2.1 Conduct a socioeconomic study of the economic importance and relevance of the beach seine fishery in Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.

- Activity 2.2 Identify the role and responsibilities of the various actors (in reference to gender issues) in beach seine fishery and describe the related economic activities.
- Activity 2.3 Prepare a management and monitoring plan for the beach seine fishery in each of the four participating countries.
- Activity 2.4 Organize a workshop to validate the management and monitoring plan of beach seine fishery in Benin, Togo, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.
- Activity 2.5 Share the results of the project with Nigeria and Liberia and with the Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC).

These activities will be conducted in a participatory approach involving all stakeholders with interest in the beach seine fishery based on case studies discussed in working groups, workshops and seminars.

5. INPUTS

5.1 Participating Governments

Each participating government commits to designate the Focal Point and alternate to execute the project. The Focal point must be a member of the National Task Group established in the framework of the EAF-Nansen Project and should have fishery management responsibilities in his/her country. The work of the focal points should be organized so as to have sufficient time and resources to undertake the technical work and liaison activities related to the development of the project, training and other activities related to the management of the beach seine fishery. Although the project will seek to bear certain costs related to technical meetings, governments should be prepared: (i) also support part of the cost of their nationals to participate in the meetings, workshops, etc.. (ii) to support expenses for hosting these meetings and also (iii) to identify and assign staff to facilitate project implementation.

5.2 EAF-Nansen Project

The total contribution of the EAF-Nansen Project is USD 100, 000 equitably shared among the 4 participating countries. Each country will receive USD 25,000. Moreover, it is envisaged that the EAF-Nansen project could make available an international consultant to facilitate the ERA workshops in the four countries and a planning expert to review and improve the management plans in the four countries with a view to harmonising them . If necessary, the EAF-Nansen project will cover one or two persons from Nigeria and Liberia to attend meetings of this project to discuss the project results.

Logical Framework

PROJECT ELEMENTS/ COMPONENTS	SUCCESS INDICATORS (= Objectively-verifiable indicators)	WAYS OF VERIFYING (= Means of Verification)
<p>1. Improved knowledge of issues related to sustainable management of the beach seine fishery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline study on the beach seine fishery developed and used by partners to monitor changes. • Identification of issues to be solved and management options selected. • Results of the baseline study validated by stakeholders. • 20 participants per country trained in the principles of the EAF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study reports available. • Report of the ERA workshop available. • Report of the workshop for the validation of the baseline study available. • Training report on the EAF.
<p>2. Management and Monitoring Plan for beach seine fishery set up, with an emphasis on resource sustainability and socio-economic performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and socioeconomic data available. • EAF principles, baseline results and socio-economic issue taken into account in management and monitoring plans of beach seine fishery in the 4 countries. • Management and monitoring plans of beach seine fishery developed in each country. • Active participation of all stakeholders involved in the management and monitoring of the beach seine fishery. • Effective cooperation between the four countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic report available. • Participation in workshops in each country. • Reports of the workshops. • Articles in the newsletter and website of the EAF-Nansen. • Participation of Liberia and Nigeria in the validation workshop of the beach seine management plans . • Participation of NTG members in the validation workshops of the other three countries