



INFO-FLASH

the SFLP... on the move...

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CECAF recommends the finalization and dissemination of the SFLP methodological guide for assessing the contribution of fisheries to national economies

The artisanal fisheries working group of the Committee for East Central Atlantic Fisheries (CECAF) has recommended that the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) finalize the methodological guide for the assessment of the contribution of fisheries to national, regional and local economies as quickly as possible. This recommendation was made after the Committee examined the guide during its third session held in Accra, Ghana, from the 7th to the 9th of June 2005. The meeting brought together 23 delegates from the 16 CECAF coastal member countries, the FAO Regional Office for Africa in Accra, and the SFLP.

The dissemination of this guide will mean that CECAF member countries will now have at their disposal, a simple but effective tool they can use to evaluate the role of artisanal fisheries in improving food security and reducing poverty. National Coordinating Units (NCUs) will therefore be in a position, even if only partially, to cover up for the dearth of information on the contribution of artisanal fisheries to national economies, and to arouse more interest for artisanal fisheries among decision-makers and development partners involved in poverty reduction programmes.

The preparation of the SFLP methodological guide started towards the end of 2003 with a first case study in Benin on the evaluation of the socio-economic contribution of fisheries to livelihoods improvement and poverty reduction in fishing communities. This exercise made it possible to confirm that the guide could be used as a tool to strengthen the capacities of government departments responsible of official statistics, in particular for access to data base on fisheries, through the development of appropriate networks, and information channels. The study was thereafter expanded to include the twelve countries participating in the SFLP countries, in order to obtain more relevant details to fine-tune the guide.

Going by the information generated by the methodological guide, participants at the Accra meeting called on the SFLP to provide support to CECAF countries on the process of informing policy-makers at every level, with the help of well-adapted strategies and communication tools. The SFLP was furthermore requested to present a synthesis of the findings of the studies being conducted in thirteen SFLP countries at the next session of the CECAF Scientific Sub-committee.

SFLP Info-Flash

The overriding objective of the **Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme** is to provide the 25 member countries with the most up to date information on the activities of the Programme. Info-Flash is produced by the Regional Support Unit based in Cotonou (Bénin).

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The Pilot Project on the participatory fisheries management in coastal zones is working on how to integrate gender in its action plan

Efforts to integrate the cross-cutting issue of gender in the execution of the action plan of the Pilot Project on participatory fisheries management in coastal zones is progressing satisfactorily.

A preliminary draft on a gender strategy was discussed during a workshop held at Pointe-Noire, Congo, from the 13th to the 17th of June 2005. Focusing on the theme: "Gender Strategy and gender organizational analysis", participants at the workshop included representatives of the four Pilot Project countries (Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania).

The workshop helped to strengthen the capacities of the Pilot Project Management Teams on the use of the gender organizational profile to finalize their gender strategies. The participants were also present at the restitution session on the gender organizational profile conducted in Kondi and Makotipoko villages in Congo. This exercise made it possible for the community members to decide on the changes they would like to see in their community. The decisions taken at community level will guide the preparation of the gender strategy for the Pilot Project.

The gender strategy will promote the development of a process for men/women complementarity in the implementation of the Pilot Project activities. Participants at the workshop defined how gender will be integrated into livelihoods diversification strategies, access and control of resources, and participation in decision-making. The gender strategy will serve as a reference framework for Pilot Project stakeholders.

According to the preliminary project for the strategy proposed by Congo, six areas of intervention have been identified for gender mainstreaming. These include decentralization, HIV/AIDS, diversification, micro-finance, community organization and development finance. Four areas have been identified at the macro level: the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the National HIV/AIDS Control Policy, Fisheries Legislation, and Micro-finance.

NEPAD¹: Make the fisheries and aquaculture sector the fifth pillar of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme

African heads of State will be meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, on the 25th August 2005 to brainstorm on the mechanism to be adopted to integrate the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This NEPAD summit titled "Fish for All" will be preceded by a technical symposium (22nd to 23rd August 2005) on the New Directions for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, the Nigerian Fisheries Day and the Africa Fisheries Exhibition (24th August 2005).

Initiated by the Nigerian Head of State, his Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Summit will be organized by NEPAD with the support of the WorldFish Center and FAO. The Abuja Summit will highlight on how investments in fisheries development will help African countries and their international partners to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the WSSP (World Summit for Sustainable Development) Plan of Implementation. It will support NEPAD's role as catalyst and facilitator of the Africa's socio-economic transformation agenda, by bringing together key stakeholders from African Union (AU) member states, Regional Economic Communities, civil society, scientific institutions and international organizations.

¹ New Partnership for Africa's Development

As a prelude to the Abuja Summit, three regional thematic workshops were organized on fisheries and aquaculture between May and June this year. The one on inland fisheries was held in Lilongwe, Malawi, the other on coastal fisheries in Dakar, Senegal, and the last on aquaculture in Cairo, Egypt.

At the end of the three meetings in which the SFLP participated, the experts recommended that the fisheries and aquaculture sector should be presented as the fifth pillar of NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). The four pillars of CAADP are: (i) extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems (ii) improving rural infrastructure and trade related capacities for market accesses; (iii) increasing food supply, reduce hunger, and improve responses to food emergency crises, and (iv) improving agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption.

The experts feel that the fisheries and aquaculture sector should occupy a special place within CAADP because of the role it plays in reducing poverty and improving food security.

Senegal: Interesting experience on autonomous management of micro-finance in M'Bour

A study conducted in Senegal by the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) between April and May 2005, on the issue of the access of fisheries stakeholders to micro-credit has revealed the fact that fishing communities in M'Bour have been successfully running a Savings and Loan Mutual Scheme on their own since 2001. The customers of the scheme are made up of 93% of community members, as against 7% in other communities around M'Bour.

The loan repayment rate is higher than that of other communities for several reasons. In M'Bour, loans are only granted after a detailed analysis of the repayment capacity of the borrower and the uncertainties linked to the fisheries sector. Add to this, the proximity of fish landing sites, their accessibility, the simplicity of the procedures (loans are obtained within five days !), the guarantee that savers have of being able to withdraw their money whenever they need it, etc.

The impact of the mutual schemes' success on local development is remarkable. For example, the mutual used part of the profit realized (1 million CFA francs²) to provide drugs for the M'Bour Health Centre, churches and for other social works. Furthermore, exploitative money-lending conditions are fast disappearing in fisheries, the access of fishing communities to financial services is improving, the savings culture is increasing and the value of fisheries products is gradually appreciating.

This self effort process started in 1996 with a high level of involvement of the leaders of the fisheries sector professionals' umbrella organization (FENAGIE Pêche - *Fédération nationale des groupements d'intérêt économique*). The consolidation of the achievements of this experience in 2001 opened the way for its extension, through the creation of ten more mutual schemes managed by the fishing communities themselves, with the support of the Italian NGO, Brothers of Men.

There is no doubt that this Senegalese experience will contribute to the annex being prepared for the *Gender and HIV/AIDS-sensitive micro-finance guide*. The study conducted in Senegal, Benin and the Gambia was undertaken to obtain further information for the preparation of an annex to the FAO guide for artisanal fisheries.

² 545 FCFA = 1US\$, at June 2005 exchange rate.

Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mali have prepared co-management plans for some of their lakes, as part of the SFLP Pilot Project on inland fisheries co-management. These documents promote participatory management with the involvement of the decentralized administrative departments, local communities, development partners, and NGO's and fishing communities. But the main issue has been the identification of the financing mechanisms that will be put in place to ensure their implementation.

In response to this problem, Burkina Faso and Mali, with the support of the Pilot Project, initiated a study on "the mechanisms and strategies for financing the co-management of lake fishing and community development". Completed in May, the study underscored the need to create a co-management support fund in the countries, through the contribution of all stakeholders. It is referred to Burkina Faso as the "*Fonds local d'aménagement et de développement*" (Local management and development fund - FLAD), and in Mali as the "*Fonds d'appui permanent à la cogestion et au développement communautaire*" (permanent fund to support co-management and community development - FAPCODEC).

Among others, the study helped to facilitate the identification of sources of finance, based on analysis of the different actors, their roles, and the benefits they derive from their activities in the waterbodies.

In Mali for example, it was discovered that the Sélingué rural development department (*Office de développement rural de Sélingué* - ODRS) can contribute 25% of the income realized from the issuing fishing licenses, and 10% of income realized from water tax to the fund. The decentralized local governments can contribute 5% of the levy on canoes. The study envisages that the communities around Lake Sélingué will allocate at least 5% of their budget to finance the plan. The Baya communities in particular can contribute 30% of the license fees that the Mali electricity company (*Société d'énergie du Mali SA*) pays them as compensation for using the generating hydro-electric power from the Sélingué dam. Where the communities are concerned, the study revealed that the fishermen are already contributing indirectly towards the implementation of the co-management plan through what they pay for their fishing license. "*But other socio-professional groups (fish mongers and processors) can pay 5 FCFA per kg of fish sold. As for NGOs and other actors, these are expected to systematically pay 1% of the budgets of the new projects initiated in the Sélingué zone to finance the co-management plan*".

To ensure sustainability for these actions, all the stakeholders who derive direct or indirect benefits from their activities along the lakes and their resources should be able to contribute towards financing the co-management plans.

Ghana: Sources for the sustainable financing of co-management of Volta identified

Ghana, with the support of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme in West Africa (SFLP), has prepared a co-management plan for Lake Volta. The plan is already being implemented through activities linked to the change of the mesh sizes of fishing nets, the involvement of fishing communities in decision-making mechanisms through the fisheries committees set up at community and district levels. However, experience in co-management has shown that finance constitutes a major obstacle to making headway and ensuring sustainability for the process.

In order to surmount this difficulty, the Pilot Project Management Team, in close collaboration with stakeholders, has come up with a financing system. In the first instance, the Pilot Project, fishing communities and the District Assembly have identified segments of the fisheries chain that can be levied a tax. About twenty contributors to the tax were identified. Some of these include fish mongers, fishing net

sellers, owners of fish-loading sites, canoe builders, owners of outboard engines, salt sellers, transporters, etc. The amounts for the levy have been fixed. As part of the first phase of the activities, the committees embarked on an awareness-raising campaign directed at the identified contributors to inform them about latest developments and to explain the basis for the contributions being demanded. It was only after this exercise that the collection of the contributions started.

As soon as the levies have been collected, they will be shared out on the basis of a negotiated grid earlier agreed upon, between community-based committees who will receive 40% of the income, the District Committees who will receive 10%, and District Assemblies who will receive 50%.

Cameroon - Chad - The Gambia - Senegal: Preparation of post-harvest overviews

Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia and Senegal have started work on their fisheries post-harvest overviews. The process started in Douala, Cameroon at a training workshop that brought together the representatives of these four countries participating in the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) Pilot Project on livelihoods improvement on post-harvest in artisanal fisheries sector.

This initiative will make it possible for each of the countries to determine the contribution of the post-harvest sub-sector to the national economy, and to obtain information that will facilitate decision-making aimed at poverty reduction in the fisheries sector in general, and the post-harvest sub-sector in particular. Finally, it aims to ensure better consideration for the post-harvest sub-sector in national development policies.

The overviews will be prepared using the "Fishphom" (Fisheries Post-Harvest Overview Manual) guide. This manual was designed to facilitate the collection and processing of information on poverty, the livelihoods of the poor, and the fisheries post-harvest sector, which is predominantly informal, and for which data is therefore difficult to obtain. This is a tool which makes it possible to highlight the relationship between the post-harvest sub-sector and development policies, to analyze the current situation of the sub-sector and the changes that have occurred, and to identify the actions to be undertaken and the areas of intervention.

During the meeting organized in Douala by the Pilot Project Regional Coordination, participants were introduced to the use of the guide. They adopted a workplan and report format which they have started filling in with available information. According to the workplan, the overviews will be completed in the four countries by December 2005.

Three questions for Benoît Horemans³ Consolidating and strengthening SFLP achievements

The SFLP, FAO resource persons, the WorldFish Center and others held a workshop in Ouidah, Benin, from the 12th to the 15th July 2005, during which you learned lessons from the past, and looked ahead to the future. What inspired this meeting?

Most of the achievements of the Programme are gradually being integrated in national policies and in the practices of the different stakeholders: fishing communities, government, civil society, NGO's, etc. Some development partners, IFAD⁴, the ADB⁵, and some bilateral cooperation agencies are already building on them.

³ SFLP Coordinator

⁴ International Fund for Agricultural Development

⁵ African Development Bank

However, during the 26th session of the FAO Committee of Fisheries (COFI) held in Rome in February 2005, participants requested the FAO to assist SFLP participating countries to raise awareness of their development partners in order to ensure that the process started by the Programme since 1999 can move forward, and be further strengthened. This was why the SFLP team and resource persons from the FAO Headquarters in Rome and its Regional Office for Africa based in Accra, the WorldFish Center and others came together for a brainstorming session in Ouidah, Benin.

During your deliberations, you discussed the future of fisheries in West Africa. What is your vision for fisheries in the region in the next fifteen years?

The fisheries sector and the artisanal fisheries sector in particular contribute quite a lot to socio-economic development at national and local levels in West African countries, although very little of this fact is known to decision-makers. Much effort to document the nature of this contribution is currently being coordinated by the Programme.

However, the “productivist” development model, which the fisheries sector in West Africa has been following for quite a while, needs to be reviewed. The sector actually creates wealth from natural resources which though renewable, are nevertheless limited. It is therefore absolutely necessary to manage the asset well, and to share the benefits derived from it equitably and in a sustainable manner.

It has therefore become quite clear in recent times that the contribution of the sector to economic development will not increase nor poverty in fishing communities eradicated, by increasing investments in the means of production and not giving any consideration to improving the state of the resource. A new approach is hence necessary and possible.

Any measures that can successfully reduce the vulnerability of fishing communities, improve their access to basic social services, and strengthen their participation in the management of the fisheries resources which the livelihoods of the fisherfolk depend on, will help to improve their living conditions while preserving their natural resources. The SFLP experience in this area can provide the details required to make speedy progress in this direction.

The financing of the Programme as was drawn up in 1999 by the DFID, FAO and the 25 participating countries will end in 2006. What arrangements are you planning to put in place to ensure that what has so far been achieved will be consolidated in such a way that poverty can continue to reduce in fishing communities?

The artisanal fisheries development strategy that emerged during the Ouidah workshop is highly dependent on good governance that will integrate the responsible and equitable management of resources, and promote economic growth and poverty reduction. As for the priority areas of intervention, these focus on international and regional cooperation, the ongoing decentralization process, strengthening of partnership between the public and private sectors, and cross-sectorial approaches.

All these details will be specified in the next three months, and discussed with the national coordinators of the Programme during their next meeting scheduled for November 2005, as well as with the different development partners of the countries concerned.

**Recent appointments of the heads of the institutions responsible for fisheries and aquaculture
in SFLP participating countries**

Table

Countries	Institutions	First name and surname	Date of appointment
Congo	Managing Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture	Mr. Appolinaire NGOUEMBE	May 2005
Mali	Director of Fisheries	Mr. Héry COULIBALY	April 2005
Benin	Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	Mr. Fatiou AKPLOGAN	February 2005
	Director of fisheries	Mrs. Catherine K. H. HOUNKPE	April 2005
Democratic Republic of Congo	Minister of Agriculture	Mr. Musafiri NALWANGO	January 2005