



FEED ^{THE} FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



FEED THE FUTURE GHANA FISHERIES RECOVERY ACTIVITY

FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT TRAINING REPORT

JUNE 2024



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Feed the Future Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity Fisheries Co-Management Training Report June 2024

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by Tetra Tech through USAID Contract No. 72064121C00001, Feed the Future Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity (GFRA).

This report was prepared by:

Tetra Tech
159 Bank Street, Suite 300
Burlington, Vermont 05401 USA
Telephone: +1 (802) 495-0282
Fax: +1 (802) 658-4247
Email: international.development@tetratech.com

Tetra Tech Contact:

Heather D'Agnes, Chief of Party
Telephone: +233 (0) 599034200
Email: heather.dagnes@tetratech.com

Authority/Disclaimer: Prepared for USAID/Ghana under Contract (72064121C00001), awarded on May 26, 2021, to Tetra Tech ARD, and entitled the Feed the Future Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity (GFRA). This document is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The views expressed and opinions contained in this report are those of the GFRA team and are not intended as statements of policy of either USAID or the cooperating organizations. As such, the contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the GFRA team and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

COVER PHOTO: All four regional SPCCs pose for a picture during one of the training sessions on Fisheries Leadership. Photo credit: GFRA, 2023.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iii
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION	iv
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
2. BACKGROUND	2
3. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OF CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES.....	3
National Level Co-management Committees.	3
Regional Level Co-Management Initiatives.....	5
Foundational training on the concept of co-management	6
Fisheries Leadership Program	6
Objectives and Approach of the Fisheries Leadership Training	7
Joint regional training.....	7
Gender considerations in fisheries management	9
Capacity strengthening of vulnerable groups	9
4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	11
Strengthened Collaboration and Allyship	11
5. NEXT STEPS.....	13
ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GREATER ACCRA SMALL PELAGIC CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	A-1
ANNEX 2: SAMPLE CONSTITUTION OF THE SMALL PELAGIC CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	A-5

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Cover page of Ghana's first Annual Operational Plan	3
Figure 2: Greater Accra SPCC after a meeting to review ToR.....	5
Figure 3: Volta regional SPCC during inauguration (left); Swearing in of the SPCC Advisory Committee (right).	6
Figure 4: SPCC members at the joint training session in Central region.....	7
Figure 5 Representatives from Western Regional SPCC presenting on their action plan during leadership training..	8
Figure 6: Greater Accra SPCC member addressing fishers on the moratorium in an engagement at Tema.....	11
Figure 7: Group photo of Volta Regional SPCC and Executives LaBECs during the 1st biannual meeting	12

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

AOP	Annual Operational Plan
CAOPA	Confédération Africaine des Organisations de Pêche Artisanale
Cat	Child Labor and Trafficking
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation
FC	Fisheries Commission
FMOC	Fisheries Management Operational Committee
FSSD	Fisheries and Scientific Survey Division
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GFRA	Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity
GITA	Ghana Industrial Trawl Association
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fisherman Council
GoG	Government of Ghana
LaBECs	Landing Beach Enforcement Committees
MFMP	Marine Fisheries Management Plan
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Traders Association
SPCC	Small Pelagic Co-management Committees
STC	Scientific and Technical Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fisheries sector in Ghana faces significant challenges, including declining fish stocks and weak centralized governance. To address these issues, the Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) and the Fisheries Commission (FC), has embraced a decentralized and participatory management approach, formalized by the adoption of the 2020 Co-management Policy. This policy encourages collaboration among local communities, government agencies, and civil society organizations to manage fisheries resources sustainably.

The USAID-funded Feed the Future Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity (GFRA) has supported this shift by institutionalizing multistakeholder advisory committees, including the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) and the Fisheries Management Operational Committee (FMOC), and developing regional co-management structures such as the Small Pelagic Co-management Committees (SPCCs). The STC ensures that management decisions are grounded in scientific data, while the Fisheries FMOC oversees the effective implementation of the 2022-2026 Marine Fisheries Management Plan (MFMP). The SPCCs facilitate grassroots involvement by promoting fishers' participation and inclusivity in management decisions, supporting the implementation of the MFMP, and encouraging voluntary compliance among fishers.

GFRA has provided extensive capacity building support to enhance the effectiveness of these co-management bodies following their formalization. Training sessions for the STC and FMOC focused on developing the Annual Operational Plan, which emphasizes sustainable exploitation of small pelagic stocks with science-based performance indicators and management strategies. The SPCCs underwent a fisheries leadership program, equipping them with the skills necessary to actively contribute to sustainable fisheries management and policy implementation. As a result, SPCCs have developed their regional-specific annual action plans in alignment with the MFMP. These plans have swiftly transitioned into implementation with notable achievements including successful community initiatives such as SPCC-led engagements to promote compliance with the moratorium on new canoe entrants which was announced by the Honorable Minister in September 2023.

Recognizing the complementary roles of SPCCs and Landing Beach Enforcement Committees (LaBECs), GFRA facilitated regional meetings to establish communication pathways and foster cooperation for sustainable fisheries management. Moving forward, GFRA will continue to support SPCC members in implementing action plans, focusing on fisher participation and feedback gathering for reviewing the MFMP and developing future Annual Operational Plans. Additionally, GFRA will collaborate with the Fish for Development project to enhance the capacity of the STC, aiding in the development of comprehensive stock assessments as the basis for effective marine stock management.

2. BACKGROUND

The co-management approach to fisheries governance has emerged as a critical strategy for addressing the complex challenges facing Ghana's fisheries sector. The depletion of fish stocks, particularly small pelagic species, has been a significant concern, threatening the livelihoods of coastal communities and the nation's food security. Weak governance and management marked by overly centralized decision-making, inconsistent enforcement, and the pervasive use of destructive and illegal fishing practices are among the key contributing factors of the declining stocks. Traditional top-down management strategies have often been ineffective.

In response to these challenges, the Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) and the Fisheries Commission (FC), has adopted a more decentralized and participatory approach to fisheries management. This shift was formalized with the approval of the country's first Co-management Policy for the marine and fisheries sector in 2020, which seeks to involve fishers and resource users directly in the decision-making process. The policy aims to create a collaborative framework where all stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, and civil society organizations (CSOs), work together to sustainably manage fisheries resources. This policy shift marks a significant milestone in Ghana's commitment to ensuring transparency and inclusivity in the governance of its fisheries resources.

Over the past two years, the Feed the Future Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity (GFRA), a five year US Agency for International Development (USAID) funded project with the goal of supporting the Government of Ghana (GoG) to put in place measures to recover the small pelagic fisheries essential for the country's food security and livelihoods, have exemplified its support to the operationalization of the approved Co-Management Policy by making co-management a core project strategy to increase collaboration and alignment between policy makers, resource users and other key stakeholders. During this time, GFRA has provided continuous support to MOFAD/FC by institutionalizing two key multistakeholder advisory committees at the national level, the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) and the Fisheries Management Operational Committee (FMOC). Since their inception, these committees have significantly contributed to fisheries governance and management in Ghana. The FMOC is tasked with overseeing the effective and timely implementation of the 2022 – 2026 Marine Fisheries Management Plan (MFMP 2022 – 2026), while the STC ensures that FC/MOFAD management decisions are grounded in the best scientific data available. Additionally, GFRA has advanced the establishment of regional co-management committees by collaborating with the FC and CSOs to develop comprehensive guidelines for their formation. These guidelines provide a formalized procedure for establishing Regional SPCCs. GFRA facilitated co-creation meetings with FC staff to develop Terms of Reference for SPCCs specifically for the small pelagic fishery. Another co-creation meeting with stakeholders was held to determine the composition of the SPCCs across the four regions.

GFRA's ongoing efforts have been instrumental in the operationalization of the Co-Management Policy, making significant strides in institutionalizing co-management structures at all levels to ensure its full and successful implementation. Following these advancements, capacity building of co-management bodies has been essential to their effective functioning. The capacity of these bodies has been strengthened in diverse ways to ensure that committees possess the necessary knowledge and technical tools to operate effectively. Tailored training programs were developed to address the specific operational needs of each of these co-management bodies. This report, presenting activities undertaken from June 2023 to June 2024, is the third installment in a set of reports that describe USAID's unwavering support and remarkable achievements in operationalizing and fortifying co-management bodies for effective fisheries governance in Ghana.

3. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OF CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

The co-management bodies established at various levels play crucial and distinctive roles, serving as key platforms that ensure stakeholder participation in management decisions. The STC ensures that management decisions are grounded in robust scientific data, while the FMOC oversees the effective implementation of the MFMP 2022-2026. The SPCCs are particularly vital, as they facilitate grassroots involvement by promoting fishers' participation and inclusivity in fisheries management decisions, supporting the implementation of the MFMP, and encouraging voluntary compliance among fishers. These diverse and essential functions require specialized skills and tools, highlighting the importance of ongoing capacity building and support for these bodies. This integrated approach strengthens the overall effectiveness of the co-management structures at the respective levels.

National Level Co-management Committees.

Following the formalization of the STC and the FMOC, GFRA facilitated a series of capacity-building trainings for their members, aimed at enhancing their effectiveness in supporting Ghana's fisheries management¹. These sessions were designed to aid the committees in crafting Ghana's inaugural fisheries Operational Plan, with a focus on bolstering scientific and managerial proficiency. Emphasis was placed on developing a suite of technical measures for inclusion in the first Annual Operational Plan, targeting sustainable exploitation of small pelagic stocks. These measures encompassed science-based performance indicators, reference points, harvest control rules, and management strategies. Leveraging on prior trainings held in December 2022 and March 2023, the final training session was conducted from in June 2023, to advance the development of the Annual Operational Plan.

As a result of these initiatives, the FMOC and STC successfully formulated a draft 2023/2024 Annual Operational Plan, delineating actionable steps for each calendar year to ensure timely realization of priorities outlined in the MFMP 2022-2026. Notably, the plan was crafted with responsiveness to evolving dynamics and emerging trends in the fisheries sector. The plan was jointly submitted to the FC by STC and FMOC leadership, followed by a collaborative review session chaired by the Deputy Ministry with senior officials from MOFAD and FC. This review aimed to ensure alignment with ministry priorities, with STC and FMOC leadership providing elucidation on participants' queries while advocating for requisite financial resources for plan implementation. This engagement facilitated government ownership and incorporation of priority activities into the annual work plan.

A significant outcome of this collaboration was MOFAD/FC's decision to structure its 2024 work plan around activities outlined in the draft Operational Plan, fostering shared responsibility between government

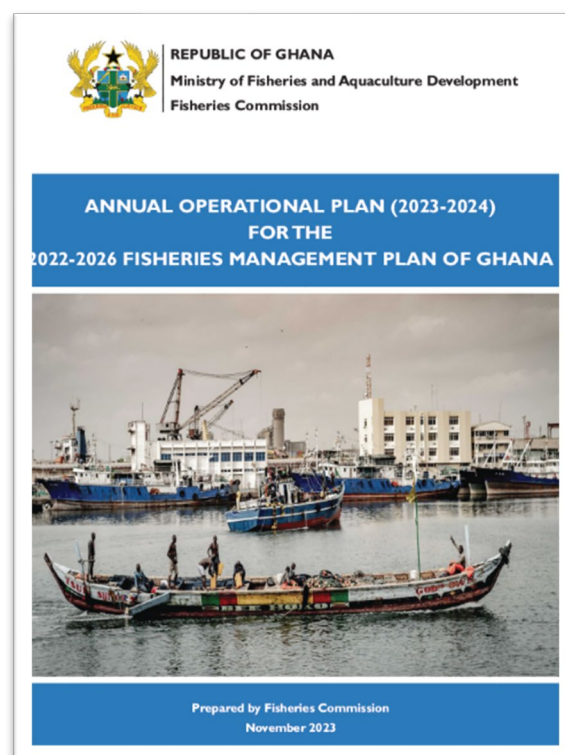


Figure 1: Cover page of Ghana's first Annual Operational Plan

¹ Details of these trainings were reported under the 2023 Fisheries Co-Management Training Report which can be found at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA021272.pdf

and stakeholders in the long-term implementation of management measures. Further support from GFRA enabled the FMOC to refine the plan, incorporating inputs from relevant stakeholders before its submission to FC for approval. Ultimately, the endorsed 2023/2024 Annual Operational Plan was formally launched at the November 2023 Fish Festival by the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development along with USAID's Deputy Mission Director.

With continued support from GFRA, the STC and FMOC² undertook additional initiatives, including a joint meeting convened by the FC to assess progress towards implementing the Ministerial Directive on trawl gear. This gathering also served as a platform for scrutinizing the draft 2023 closed season impact assessment report and the 2022 stock assessment report for small pelagic fisheries. During discussions on the Ministerial Directive, the FC highlighted concerns about the prevalence of juvenile demersal species and the high exploitation rate of small pelagics, particularly based on observer and at-port samples collected from industrial vessels. Notably, FC analysis revealed that all round sardinellas examined from these samples were immature, raising doubts about the Directive's efficacy in managing small pelagic and juvenile fish landings. The committee sought clarity on the sampling methodology and urged the FC to provide comprehensive data on catch composition, size distribution, and species biology annually to gauge the directive's impact.

To gain deeper insights into the directive's ramifications, the committee proposed at-sea sampling by FC to collect fish samples, conduct various analyses, and compile independent scientific reports. Concerns were also raised about the reliability of at-port sampling by the FSSD, prompting the recommendation to test modified gear during the arrival of R/V Fridtjof Nansen in June. GFRA committed to collaborating with the Norwegian Fish for Development project to incorporate the committee's suggestions during the gear trial.

Furthermore, the STC and FMOC assessed the biological impact assessment of the 2023 closed fishing season, acknowledging improvements in pelagic species spawning potential during the closure. However, the reopening saw increased landings, followed by a subsequent decline attributed to heightened fishing efforts and illegal practices, ultimately undermining the closure's effectiveness. The STC and FMOC agreed with the report's findings, underscoring the imperative of bolstered enforcement to preserve the benefits of the closed season and suggesting July and August as optimal months for closure. The STC and FMOC issued a joint communique summarizing these recommendations, which was formally submitted to the FC's executive director for necessary action.

GFRA advised and supported the FC to establish a sub-committee of the STC focused on stock assessment, tasked with actively conducting annual stock assessments for Ghana's fisheries. It should be noted that staff from the FSSD are part of this subcommittee. Previously, this responsibility rested with the FSSD and underwent review by the scientific committee; however, the newly formed sub-committee will collaborate directly with the FSSD throughout the assessment process, encompassing data cleanup and modeling. Concurrently, with backing from the Norwegian Fish-for-Development Project, the FSSD successfully assessed the status of three small pelagic species, including anchovy and two sardinellas using the 2022 fisheries data. Subsequently, the STC Stock Assessment Sub-committee convened to scrutinize the 2022 assessment report.

Findings from the 2022 Stock Assessment review by the STC revealed overexploitation of round sardinella and anchovy stocks, while flat sardinella was found to be sustainably exploited but below the biomass reference point. This means that the population size of flat sardinella fish stocks is still below

² This year, the STC and FMOC have worked closely together, due to their complementary roles and as continued capacity-building for both committees. For the FMOC, joint meetings provided deeper understanding of the scientific findings, data analysis, and methodologies used in fisheries science. For the STC, they offered insight into the practical challenges and complexities of applying scientific knowledge to management decisions. These collaborative meetings also build mutual respect and trust between the committees, enhancing their ability to understand and fulfill their assigned roles more effectively. Going forward, the committees will only meet jointly for specific actions that necessitate their combined expertise and input.

the targeted level needed for long term health and stability of the stock. Consequently, the STC is considering a recommendation for a 30% reduction in fishing effort based on the stock with the lowest biomass. This recommendation considers ongoing implementation of the three-year moratorium on new entrants as a significant step towards effort reduction, especially towards the reduction of artisanal canoes from 12,181 to sustainable levels of 10,000 canoes as indicated in the marine fisheries management plan (2022-2026). The report underscores that while various factors contribute to stock declines, maintaining current fishing effort is unsustainable in the long term. The 2022 Stock Assessment report will be finalized, taking into consideration all STC inputs and suggestions. Upon finalization, the STC will formally submit management recommendations to the FC based on the report.

GFRA will collaborate with the Fish for Development project to provide training for the STC Stock Assessment Sub-committee, enhancing their capacity to support the FSSD in conducting additional stock assessments to inform decision-making and facilitate effective management practices.

Regional Level Co-Management Initiatives

Regional co-creation meetings for regional SPCCs took place in April 2023 for Central and Western regions, May 2023 for Greater Accra, and June 2023 for the Volta region with stakeholders, with the goal of determine the key fisher groups that would comprise the membership of each SPCC. Following



Figure 2: Greater Accra SPCC after a meeting to review ToR

these meetings, each identified association elected representatives to the SPCC. The elected members were then vetted by a committee constituted and led by the FC Regional Directors in their respective regions. These processes were crucial to ensure transparency and to guarantee that only qualified individuals were nominated as representatives of their associations.

The committees have varying memberships, with an average membership size of 13, depending on the recognizable resource user groups in the respective regions. Associations such as Ghana National Canoe Fisherman Council (GNCFC), National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA), Canoe and Fishing Gear Owners Association of Ghana (CaFGOAG) and African Confederation of Professional Artisanal Fisheries Organizations

(CAOPA), have representation on all four regional SPCCs. Other fisher groups like Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association (GIFA), cold store operators, migrant fishers, and Konkohemaa (Queen Fish Mothers) were included on some SPCCs depending on their relevance and strength in a particular region. Traditional authorities such as the chiefs, chief fishermen, marine police, and Regional Coordinating Council representatives together with the FC regional director serve on the advisory committees recognizing their important role as leaders in the sector but also minimizing the potential for intimidation or influence on decision making.

With the SPCC membership from the respective regional associations constituted, GFRA supported the Fisheries Commission (FC) in leading a process with SPCC members to review and adopt Terms of Reference (ToR) that delineates their roles and responsibilities. See Annex I for an example of the TOR. This process was inclusive and participatory, ensuring that the ToR reflected the unique needs and perspectives of all stakeholders involved. As a result, the SPCCs now operate within a clearly defined framework that aligns with established guidelines and promotes effective governance. The SPCCs were also trained and guided to develop and adopt their locally contextualized constitutions (see Annex I) and

elect their leadership. Formalization of the SPCCs were necessary, hence GFRA and Hen Mpoano supported MOFAD/FC to publicly recognize and delegate management authority to the SPCCs through a formal inauguration and swearing in ceremony during durbars in their respective regions. The Greater Accra, Volta and Central regions were inaugurated in September 2023 while Western region was inaugurated in October 2023.

SPCC Capacity Strengthening: Since their inception, the SPCCs have undergone a series of trainings on various subjects. These trainings began with foundational sessions introducing the concept of co-management. Additional training activities have covered fisheries management topics, communication and advocacy, and gender considerations in fisheries. All these trainings are part of a comprehensive training program termed the fisheries leadership program.



Figure 3. Volta regional SPCC during the inauguration (left), Swearing in of Advisory committee of the SPCC (right).

Foundational training on the concept of co-management

Since large-scale co-management like the SPCCs is new in Ghana, it was crucial for all parties to understand the concept thoroughly. Therefore, initial training on co-management was conducted for all SPCCs during their inception meetings in their respective regions. This training introduced members to the fundamental principles and practices of shared decision-making and responsibilities in fisheries management, laying the groundwork for effective collaboration among all stakeholders. The training emphasized the importance of cooperation among fishers, government agencies, and local communities to ensure sustainable fisheries management. It highlighted that effective management requires active participation from all parties, not just a single entity. A significant focus was on clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, fostering an environment where all parties feel invested and willing to contribute to sustainable practices. Additionally, the training explained the various co-management structures, detailing how they function and interact. This provided committee members with a clear understanding of how different groups, including regulatory bodies and local fishers, can collaborate within a structured framework to achieve common goals. By understanding the linkages between different co-management groups at various levels, committee members could see how local actions fit into broader national and regional strategies, ensuring coherent and effective management outcomes.

The foundational trainings also introduced the SPCCs to the co-management policy of Ghana to ensure that members gained a thorough understanding of this policy, which is crucial for their roles in fisheries management.

Fisheries Leadership Program

The fisheries leadership program is a comprehensive training which involves different training activities on fisheries management related topics, gender and fisheries communication specially designed for the SPCC based on identified knowledge gap among the SPCC members. Topics included in the leadership

program are concept of co-management, fisheries leadership competence, general introduction to fisheries management, fisheries governance and law enforcement, fisheries communication and advocacy, and gender considerations in fisheries.

While foundational elements of the concept of co-management were treated during inception meetings, trainings on fisheries governance and law enforcement, aspect of fisheries leadership competence, advocacy and gender were treated after the formalization of the committees. Following their formalization, the SPCCs have received three major trainings on topics mentioned above.

Objectives and Approach of the Fisheries Leadership Training

The overarching objective of the fisheries leadership program is to build the leadership skills of the SPCCs, to spearhead initiatives in fisheries management. By delving into areas such as fisheries management, governance and policy frameworks, fisheries law enforcement and the specific roles and responsibilities of the SPCC, the program seeks to foster their active engagement in management discussions. Additionally, specialized trainings on agenda setting, advocacy skill development, and gender considerations in fisheries management were geared towards enabling committee members to formulate and prioritize actionable plans while ensuring effective two-way communication with their constituents. This comprehensive approach not only enhances the committee's capacity to engage their respective associations on crucial management matters but also facilitates valuable feedback mechanisms. Gender training, within this context, is aimed at fostering an understanding of gender dynamics in fisheries and their practical application in fulfilling their roles. The program was also designed to facilitate the development of comprehensive action plans, ultimately ensuring alignment with and active contributions to the successful implementation of Marine Fisheries Management Plan (2022-2026).

Practical skills essential for effective leadership in fisheries management are a core focus of the program. Hands-on training sessions cover techniques such as data collection and analysis, conflict resolution, negotiation, and communication. To ensure the application of theoretical concepts, the program incorporates fisheries simulation games, case studies, and fieldwork. These experiential learning methods enable participants to sharpen their abilities and apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios effectively. The suits of topic integrated in this program are delivered using different approach. Some training activities are conducted as joint sessions with participation from all regions or pairs of regions, while others are conducted on a regional basis. This approach ensures the development of strong regional teams, while also fostering collaboration and inter-regional experience sharing.

Joint regional training

After their establishment, it was essential to unify all SPCCs for information and experience sharing. In December 2023, GFRA and Hen Mpoano facilitated a two-day training in the Central region for all four SPCCs. The session covered vital topics like fisheries governance, law enforcement, and conflict resolution, ensuring the SPCCs possess necessary operational skills. Specifically, they were trained on Ghana's fisheries legal and policy frameworks with focus on the Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625), MFMP (2022 - 2026), and the AOP. This training aimed to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of existing regulations and policies within the fisheries sector, enabling them to effectively function as a management body and contribute meaningfully to management decisions. This training provided



Figure 4: SPCC members at the joint training session in Central region

committee members the opportunity to critically review these documents, gaining a comprehensive understanding of specific management goals and objectives, particularly priorities for the 2023/2024 operational year. This understanding was crucial for developing broad-based annual action plans specific to each region, in alignment with the AOP. Key measures such as the moratorium, closed season, and re-characterization were prioritized by the SPCCs. As a result of this training, each region now has a well-defined annual action plan covering actions to be taken from January 2024 to December 2024.

The joint training provided opportunity for SPCC members and the FC to discuss the long-term sustainability of SPCCs, crucial for successful fisheries co-management in Ghana. The SPCC proposed practical strategies for continuing meetings with limited funding, such as using video technology, collecting dues, and seeking support from development partners and CSOs. Members, especially from the Volta Region, highlighted their voluntary efforts and success in organizing meetings without external support, inspiring other regions to initiate self-driven meetings. This discussion has been beneficial, as it has generated instances where the SPCCs have successfully convened meetings without relying on external funding.

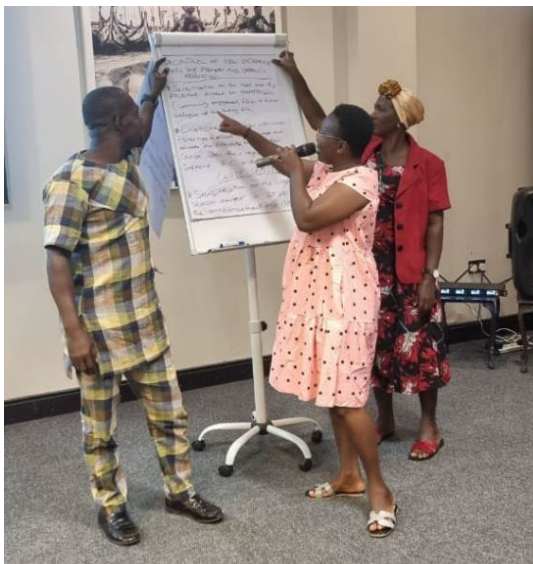


Figure 5 Representatives from Western Regional SPCC presenting on their action plan during leadership training

Given the persistent challenges in fisheries law enforcement within the Ghanaian fisheries industry, the joint training dedicated a significant amount of time to this critical issue. The training facilitated an in-depth discussion on the role of the SPCCs in fisheries law enforcement, indicating the importance of their responsibilities within the co-management framework. During the training, SPCC members engaged in sessions that highlighted their position in ensuring voluntary compliance among fishers. The discussions emphasized that their role necessitates a strong commitment to upholding the law, not only in their official capacities but also as exemplars of compliance for the wider fishing community. The program stressed that effective law enforcement begins with the SPCCs themselves, necessitating a culture of integrity and accountability. The leadership training acted as an intense "house cleaning" exercise for the committee members.

The joint training also focused on conflict identification and resolution, essential for effective fisheries management. It equipped SPCC members with skills to address disputes constructively through case studies and practical exercises. Techniques like active listening and negotiation were emphasized. The training fostered team spirit, reducing rivalries between fisher associations and promoting unity. This solidarity is expected to enhance the SPCC's effectiveness in managing small pelagic fisheries. Moreover, it facilitated open communication, fostering a culture of transparency and mutual respect within the SPCC.

Gender considerations in fisheries management

The persistence of gender inequalities, gender-based violence (GBV), and child labor and trafficking (CLaT) in Ghana's fisheries underscores the importance of addressing these issues for sustainable management. A dedicated module was developed to help SPCCs integrate gender considerations into fisheries management. It emphasizes understanding the roles and challenges of both men and women in the sector to promote gender equity and social inclusion. The module utilizes a mix of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and participatory activities for a comprehensive learning experience.

September 2023, members of all four SPCCs underwent targeted training on gender considerations in fisheries management. Key topics included sex and gender norms, gender stereotypes, and their role in facilitating gender-based violence (GBV). The training highlighted how entrenched societal norms perpetuate GBV within the fisheries sector and explored root causes, particularly power dynamics and control. Patriarchal structures prevalent in fisheries, where men dominate and women are often subordinate, were critically examined, shedding light on how these dynamics facilitate GBV and hinder gender equity.

In April 2024, the second phase of the module focused on empowering women and youth in fisheries management. It aimed to address tokenism by providing genuine empowerment and meaningful representation for these marginalized groups. The training equipped women and youth with tools and confidence to actively engage in decision-making processes, amplifying their voices and enriching deliberations. Given entrenched patriarchal norms, many women face barriers to expressing their perspectives in committees. This training aimed to cultivate the capability and assertiveness necessary for these groups to contribute effectively to management decisions.

The training focused on integrating gender considerations into fisheries management through various topics. It provided a refresher on gender dynamics in the fisheries sector and empowered participants to build confidence, assertiveness, and effective communication skills. Role mapping exercises highlighted the contributions and challenges of youth and women, while gender policy analysis equipped participants to advocate for inclusive policymaking. Creating safe and empowering spaces within the SPCC and fostering allyship were also emphasized. As a result, participants gained a stronger understanding of gender dynamics, developed practical advocacy skills, and were empowered to create inclusive environments for effective functioning of the SPCCs. An interesting outcome of the training was the admission, by some female participants, of their inability to participate fully in the SPCC meetings or voice their opinions. GFRA will still need to emphasize the implementation of co-management in a way that creates opportunities for women and youth to participate meaningfully and comfortably.

The April 2023 training placed a strong emphasis on enhancing the capacity of youth and women within SPCCs. Its primary goal was to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively advocate for their issues and address their unique challenges in co-management meetings. The members received training in communication and advocacy methods tailored to their needs. As a result of this targeted agenda setting and prioritization, and advocacy training, SPCC women and youth have now possess increased confidence and capability to voice their concerns and champion their interests within their committees. With a deeper understanding of agenda setting and prioritization, they are better equipped to ensure that their issues are given due attention in decision-making processes. Additionally, the training has instilled a sense of agency and purpose among SPCC women and youth, empowering them to actively shape policies and initiatives that address the specific challenges.

Capacity strengthening of vulnerable groups

Considering that some fisher associations in the Western and Central regions are not formally organized, particularly groups like the Kokohema and crew members, Hen Mpoano has undertaken capacity-strengthening initiatives to establish a platform for these groups. This effort is crucial, as the SPCCs must ensure the participation of all their constituents. Without strong, organized groups,

mobilizing these fisher communities becomes challenging, and they risk being excluded from participating in fisheries management measures. Hen Mpoano's capacity-strengthening activities aim to help these informal groups become well-organized and recognized in decision-making processes. By providing training and support, Hen Mpoano is laying the groundwork for these groups to effectively engage in co-management activities. This includes helping them understand their roles and responsibilities, fostering leadership skills, and facilitating communication and collaboration among members.

As a result, these groups will be better equipped to participate in fisheries management discussions, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs addressed. This initiative not only strengthens the overall co-management framework but also promotes inclusivity and equitable representation within the fisheries sector.

4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Since their formalization, the SPCCs have made significant strides in advancing fisheries management initiatives across the regions. As a result of the trainings, each region now has a well-defined annual action plan tailored to its specific needs and conditions. Implementation of this action plan begun from March 2024 because after the development of action plans, there were a couple of meetings to review and refine the action plans. Following the development of their action plans the SPCCs have successfully supported the implementation of fisheries management measures. Each SPCC conducted a series of community engagements to educate fishers on the moratorium with focus on the replacement scheme, sustaining momentum since the announcement. The Greater Accra SPCC conducted seven community cluster engagements, the Volta region conducted three district-level engagements, and the Central and Western regional SPCCs conducted eleven engagements each. The canoe replacement scheme outlines



Figure 6: Greater Accra SPCC member addressing fishers on the moratorium in an engagement at Tema.

the procedures for replacing damaged canoes. It includes a rigorous verification process that a damaged canoe must undergo before receiving final approval from the ministry. This approval is necessary to obtain a permit from the Forestry Commission to carve a new canoe. The SPCCs thoroughly explained this procedure to their fellow fishers, which helped maintain calm and acceptance due to the SPCCs' involvement in the process. It was

evident that fishers from the grassroots do not have full understanding of these measures, however, the community level engagements deepened fishers understanding especially on the moratorium. Plans are currently underway to undertake community level engagements during the 2024 close season.

Prior to developing their action plans, the Central and Western regional committees spearheaded fisher-to-fisher initiatives on IUU fishing and sensitized fishers about the close season to promote adherence to regulations. These initiatives were facilitated by Hen Mpoano. With the support of the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), the SPCCs participated in the socioeconomic monitoring of the 2023 close season and are currently involved in the biological monitoring of the 2023 close season, a year-long data collection exercise concluding in June 2024.

Strengthened Collaboration and Allyship

Recognizing that the SPCCs and the Landing Beach Enforcement Committees (LaBECs³) operate at different levels but have complementary roles, establishing a robust communication pathway between these two entities is essential for seamless information flow. To this end, the SPCCs, as part of their action plans, have instituted biannual meetings with the LaBECs ensuring strengthen collaboration and facilitate information sharing. So far, each region has convened one meeting which allowed the respective SPCCs to engage with all LaBECs within their jurisdictions. These meetings provided a platform to develop modalities for effective and efficient communication and presented the opportunity to carefully explain the responsibilities and interconnections between the two committees. Through detailed discussions, ambiguities and misconceptions regarding their respective roles were addressed, particularly clarifying the direct reporting entities for the LaBECs. To enhance communication and

³ See GFRA's Eyes on the Water Progress Reports located on the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) for a full description of the roles, responsibilities and status of implementation of the Landing Beach Enforcement Committees (LaBECs).



Figure 7: Group photo of Volta Regional SPCC and Executives LaBECs during the 1st biannual meeting

coordination, both committees collaboratively established channels and approaches for effective interaction. These included creating a common WhatsApp platform, scheduling quarterly collaborative meetings, and implementing systematic sharing of reports and calls for information exchange and feedback.

The meetings also provided space for peaceful discourse, allowing both committees to explore a collaborative approach to resolving existing internal conflicts among resource users. An example of this can be seen in Keta, where the LaBECs raised concerns about members of the

Volta Regional SPCC not complying with certain fisheries regulatory measures, thereby undermining their authority as they are not leading by example. The biannual meeting in the Volta region helped resolve this issue, fostering peaceful collaboration between the Volta region SPCC and LaBECs.

5. NEXT STEPS

Given that the fisheries sector's co management policy was just adopted in 2020, co-management is a new approach in Ghana. Its successful implementation requires time and an adaptive learning strategy. Over the past two years, GFRA has supported MOFAD and the FC to establish co-management bodies at national and regional levels, defining their roles, responsibilities, and authorities in close collaboration with stakeholders. However, building understanding, acceptance, and strong and appropriate implementation of strong co-management will take time. GFRA will continue to build the capacity of the STC, FMOC and SPCCs through the end of the project, emphasizing fisheries management, science, leadership, and participatory processes. GFRA will employ a "learning by doing" approach, ensuring trainings are complemented by action plans that allow these bodies to plan and implement co-management activities. With action plans already developed, GFRA will continue to support the four regional SPCCs to implement these action plans, focusing on harnessing fisher participation by incorporating feedback from their constituents on management measures. This feedback loop is essential for reviewing the MFMP and developing the AOP for the 2025 operational year. SPCC members will continue to receive training in fisheries management and leadership competence to ensure they have the full capacity to operate efficiently and effectively. GFRA will also emphasize sustainability, while also emphasizing that due to the nascent nature of these co-management institutions, government and development partners support will likely be necessary beyond the life of the GFRA project.

ANNEX I: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GREATER ACCRA SMALL PELAGIC CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Terms of Reference for Greater Accra Small Pelagic Co-Management Committee (SPCC)
of the Fisheries Commission**

CONTEXT

The Fisheries Act, 2002 Act 625 Section 2.2 mandates the Fisheries Commission to prepare and keep under continuous review a fisheries plan for the management and development of fisheries under the jurisdiction of Ghana. It further directs per Section 42 (1) that the Plan shall be based on the underlined principles of:

- a) Best scientific information available
- b) Optimal utilization of the fishery resources; and
- c) Good management practices

Section 42 (3) Fisheries Act 2002 (Act 625) also requires that “The Commission shall be responsible in collaboration with such state agencies as the Commission considers appropriate for the implementation of a fishery plan”. Subsequently, Section 9 also grants that “The Commission may appoint committees it considers necessary for the implementation of its functions”.

The Fisheries Management Plan (2022 – 2026) has co-management as one of its guiding principles, recognizing the partnership arrangement in which the community of fisheries resource users (fishers), government, and other stakeholders like the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and research institutions share the responsibilities and authority for the fishery. It also recognizes that shared responsibility is an important part of managing the fisheries resources of Ghana. This Management Plan, therefore, seeks to promote collaboration, participatory decision making and shared responsibility with all stakeholders.

The Co-management Policy for the Fisheries Sector seeks to enhanced participation of community of fisheries resource users in fisheries management through the delegation of management decision making from central management authority to local management authorities. It provides the basis for the establishment of co-management committees including the Small Pelagic Co-management Committee (SPCC) as a large-scale fisheries co-management unit. It provides the framework for setting up the co-management committees.

The SPCC is an independent multi-stakeholder committee with an overarching mission to support the implementation and review of the fisheries management plan, which employs the principles of co-management to build trust and improve governance of the marine fisheries. The SPCC will provide the platform for transparency and increased stakeholder involvement in the formulation and implementation of fisheries policy.

Thus, the SPCC strives to promote inclusivity, ownership, responsible fishing practices, and voluntary compliance with fisheries management measures for the sustainable management of Ghana’s fishery resources. Relying on advice from Fisheries Management Operational Committee and the Science and Technical Committee (STC), the SPCC will promote active fisher participation and voluntary compliance in the implementation and design of current and subsequent fisheries management plans. It will ensure fisher inputs including local knowledge and experiences are included as recommendations to the Fisheries Commission to guide the effective implementation and development of Fisheries Management Plans and its Operational Plan.

The Committee will develop local action plans that promote effective implementation of the fisheries management plan and critically assess the status of implementation of such plans in line with annual Operational Plans and provide guidance to the FC to ensure successful implementation of the plans. The careful evaluation and assessment of key actions against identified indicators will ensure efficient monitoring of the performance of the FMP and its OP. The committee will develop a simple monitoring and evaluation protocol to guide annual reviews and improvements on its action plans in line with annual

Operational Plan as advancements in knowledge and management are made during the period of implementation.

The USAID Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity (GFRA) will provide technical and logistical support to the Fisheries Commission for the establishment and operationalization of regional Small Pelagic Co-management Committees (SPCC) within the life of the project.

CORE FUNCTIONS

The SPCC functions would include among others:

- Development of action plans in line with annual Operational Plans for the management of the small pelagic fishery. The action plan should advance the implementation/ facilitation of measures in the Fisheries Management Plan
- Support communication of key fisheries management measures to local level/constituents and feedback. Sharing of lessons learn
- Promote/facilitate conflict resolution at the regional level.
- Develop a framework for the implementation, tracking and evaluation of approved action plan.
- Promoting voluntary compliance among resource users.
- Support the biennial review of the FMP at the regional level.
- Provide input in the development of annual Operational Plans and/or Implementation Guidelines based on emerging trends and lessons learnt to ensure effective implementation of fisheries management plans
- Promote active fisher participation in the development and review of fisheries management plans
- Undertake any other related activities/actions as they arise or assigned to by FC
- Submit annual reports on the SPCC activities to the FMOC.

MEMBERSHIP

The SPCC members will be nominated from recognized organizations/institutions with direct interest in the small pelagic stocks, shown in the table below based on skills, knowledge, and experience in the fishing sector and in the conservation and management of fisheries resources. The nominees will be vetted and appointed by the FC Regional Director and will serve for a term of three (3) years and cannot serve for more than two terms during the implementation period of the FMP.

Members of the SPCC will vote and elect a chairperson and a vice at its first meeting. Where the Chair is a male, the vice should be a female. The Chairperson will ensure a fair representation of input from all members and oversee the proceedings of the Committee. The composition of the SPCC will include representative from;

1. Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
2. Canoe and Gear Owners Association of Ghana
3. National Fish Processors and Traders Association
4. Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association
5. FC/Zonal officer (no voting rights)
6. Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association
7. Cold Store Operators
8. CAOPA
9. Civil Society Organizations (ex-officio capacity)
10. Input dealers' association
11. Ghana Tuna Association

POWER TO CO-OPT

The Committee may co-opt individual(s) with related expertise as and when necessary.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CHAIRPERSON & VICE - The Chairperson/Vice must ensure that;

- the Committee functions properly,
- there is full participation during meetings,
- all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out,
- He/she represents the Committee as and when needed,

MEMBERS

The responsibilities of the members include:

- Commitment to ensure continuity in participating actively in all meetings and activities
- Contribute local knowledge and expertise in the development of action plans in line with annual operational plans
- Ensure feedback of collection decisions taken at the regional level

SECRETARIAT

The FC Regional Directorate will act as the secretariat in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Committee. The Secretariat will comprise of staff responsible for ensuring meetings are effectively organized and minuted, maintaining effective records and administration.

MEETINGS

- The quorum for the meeting should be of at least 8 members (five-member institutions) of the Operational Committee listed above.
- Hold four meetings annually, one per quarter.
- As and when there is the need, the chairperson will convene a meeting.

HONORARIUM

All members of the SPCC shall serve without compensation and shall be reimbursed for the expenses incurred during travel and in the performance of their duties.

ANNEX 2: SAMPLE CONSTITUTION OF THE SMALL PELAGIC CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION OF THE GREATER ACCRA SMALL PELAGIC CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THE FISHERIES COMMISSION OF GHANA

ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

SECTION A: NAME

The committee shall be known as the Greater Accra Small Pelagic Co-management Committee (hereinafter in this constitution called ‘the committee’)

SECTION B: PURPOSE

1. The purpose of the committee is to support the implementation and review of the fisheries management plan, which employs the principles of co-management to build trust and improve governance of the marine fisheries.
2. The SPCC will provide the platform for transparency and increased stakeholder involvement in the formulation and implementation of fisheries policy.
3. The committee shall promote active fisher participation and voluntary compliance in the implementation and design of current and subsequent fisheries management plans. It will ensure fisher inputs including local knowledge and experiences are included as recommendations to the Fisheries Commission to guide the effective implementation and development of Fisheries Management Plans and its Operational Plan.
4. The Committee will develop local action plans that promote effective implementation of the fisheries management plan and critically assess the status of implementation of such plans in line with annual Operational Plans and provide guidance to the FC to ensure successful implementation of the plans.
5. The committee shall develop a simple monitoring and evaluation protocol to guide annual reviews and improvements on its action plans in line with annual Operational Plan as advancements in knowledge and management are made during the period of implementation.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION A: REQUIREMENT

- I. The SPCC members will be nominated from recognized organizations/institutions, such as listed below, with direct interest in the small pelagic stocks, based on skills, knowledge, and experience in the fishing sector and in the conservation and management of fisheries resources.
 - a. Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
 - b. Canoe and Gear Owners Association of Ghana
 - c. National Fish Processors and Traders Association
 - d. Konkohemaa/Fish Mommies/Fish Queens
 - e. Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association
 - f. FC/Zonal officer (Advisory capacity with no voting rights)
 - g. Cold Store Operators Association-Greater Accra and Volta Region Specific
 - h. CAOPA/other processors
 - i. Civil Society Organizations (ex-officio capacity)

2. The nominees will be vetted and appointed by the FC Regional Director and will serve for a term of three (3) years and cannot serve for more than two terms during the implementation period of the FMP.
3. Membership decision shall not be discriminated on the basis of association, gender, ethnic group, disability, health or marital status.
4. The Committee may co-opt individual(s) with related expertise as and when necessary

SECTION B: RIGHT

1. All members are eligible to attend meetings and events of the committee.
2. All members have the liberty to contribute their ideas, without hindrance, to any subject of discussion in a meeting.
3. All members have the right to vote in the election of leadership of the committee.

SECTION C: OFFICERS

1. The following shall be officers of the committee.
 - a. Chairperson
 - b. Vice Chairperson
 - c. Secretary

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A person shall not qualify to be elected unless he/she:

- a. Is a member of the committee
- b. Has the support of at least two (2) registered members for nomination

3. PROCEDURE FOR ELECTIONS

- a. The registered members of the committee shall elect the chair and vice chair under the supervision of the Regional Director of the FC. There should be gender balance in the election of Chair and vice chair.
- b. A vacancy created in any office shall be filled by an election by the members of the committee. A vacancy is created when a position is left vacant for a year.
- c. The FC representative shall automatically serve as the secretary to the committee.

4. RESPONSIBILITY OF OFFICERS

- a. Chairperson & Vice

The Chairperson/Vice must ensure that;

- i. the Committee functions properly,
- ii. there is full participation during meetings,
- iii. all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out,

- iv. He/she represents the Committee as and when needed,
- v. He/she shall act as the spokesperson for the committee
- b. Secretary
 - i. The Secretariat shall ensure meetings are effectively organized and minutes taken
 - ii. The secretary shall maintain effective records and administration of the committee.
 - iii. Prepare the agenda for meetings of the committee in consultation with the Chairperson
 - iv. Maintain the membership list
 - v. Deal with correspondence
 - vi. Collect and circulate any relevant information within the Association

SECTION D: WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Any member who fails to attend three (3) successive meetings of the committee without proper notification to the committee. The Chairperson shall warn the members accordingly after two successive absences.
2. Any members who are convicted of a criminal offence or for non-compliance with the management measures in the fishery management plan, which the committee stands to promote.
3. The committee may refer disciplinary problems to the advisory committee.

ARTICLE III: PROCEEDINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION

1. The committee should meet at least once every quarter. Meetings of the committee should also be convened at the request of at least 5 members of the committee.
2. The Chairperson shall convene meetings, whether regular or special committee meetings. Members of the committee should be given at least 14 days' notice of the proposed meeting.
3. The quorum for the meeting should be at least 8 members (five-member institutions) of the associations listed above.
4. Minutes of all meetings must be maintained by the Secretary.
5. The committee shall produce quarterly and annual report.

ARTICLE IV: AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

- a) This Constitution may be amended provided that any proposal for amendment is supported by two-thirds (66%) majority vote in a General Meeting of the Committee
- b) No amendment of this Constitution shall have any binding effect unless and until notice of the same is sent to the Regional Office of the FC, including a confirmed set of minutes of the meeting at which the resolution was made.

ARTICLE V: EFFECTIVE DATE

This Constitution shall enter into force upon the inauguration of the committee by the Regional Director.

ARTICLE VI: LAW APPLICABLE

The performance of committee and interpretation of its terms shall be governed by the Laws of Ghana.

Signed byon day of20.....



FEED^{THE}FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

www.feedthefuture.gov