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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Fisheries Gender Network 3rd Annual Meeting Report

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SNV: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/ghana>

ACRONYMS

CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CRC	Coastal Resource Center
DAA	Development Action Association
DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
FC	Fisheries Commission
GAA	Ghana Aquaculture Association
GIFA	Ghana Inshore Fishermen's Association
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
HM	Hen Mpoano
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Development Program
WIAD	Women in Agricultural Development

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Gender Team on SFMP appreciates the active participation of all members of the Network, especially new members such as representatives from Women in Agricultural Development (WIAD), MoGCSP and Fisheries Commission.

The team is also grateful for the continuous support of the leadership of all the implementing partners who allowed their staff to participate in these annual meetings.

Our appreciation also goes to the Fisheries Post Harvest Specialist on SFMP.

Finally the Network appreciates the support of SNV and Hen Mpoano for organizing this meeting and their efforts towards running and sustaining the Network.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) supports the Government of Ghana's fisheries efforts to end overfishing and rebuild marine fish stocks through the adoption of responsible and sustainable fishing practices. Responsible and sustainable practices are seen as a prerequisite for reducing exploitation to end overfishing and maintain the sustainability of Ghana's marine fisheries in order to increase its wild-caught local marine food fish supply and bring greater profitability to the fisheries sector—which in turn has the potential to benefit over 100,000 men and women indirectly (Okyere-Nyako *et al*, 2016).

The Gender Analysis conducted by SFMP in 2015, recognizes the traditional roles men and women play in the fisheries sector, with men having more control over fishery resources than the women. Men are also more involved in the management decisions of the resources than the women. The Project therefore intends to empower women and increase their voices in the fisheries industry.

As part of interventions to ensure effective gender mainstreaming which incorporates specific needs of women, men and the youth, a gender network on fisheries was established in March 2016 to ensure that gender concerns are taken on board and addressed accordingly. The founding members of the Network have received training on gender mainstreaming and on tools for mainstreaming gender into their fisheries activities based on the SFMP Gender Mainstreaming Manual. The Fisheries Gender Network is involved in gender mainstreaming learning activities and meet to discuss progress and challenges.

Currently the SFMP hosts and funds the Network and there is a need to ensure the sustainability of the Network beyond the Project term. The 3rd Annual meeting was therefore organized to address this issue and further plan the Network's support to the Fisheries Commission towards institutionalizing Gender Focal Persons at all levels of the Commission's operation.

BACKGROUND

The Gender Network had its 3rd annual meeting on Tuesday 5th December, 2017 and was attended by participants from 10 different Institutions. The members discussed activities supported by SFMP in its third year of implementation and planned activities for the 4th year of the project.

Participants also developed an implementation plan for supporting the Fisheries Commission towards implementing the Fisheries Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and the opportunities for sustaining the network.

The meeting had representations from fisheries associations (NAFPTA, GIFA & GNCFC), SFMP implementing partners (DAA, CEWEFIA, Hen Mpoano, SNV and FON), MOFAD, MOFA (WIAD), MoGCSP, the Ghana Aquaculture Association (GAA) and the media.

Workshop Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Review the previous year's activities
- Review the plan for year 4 of the project
- Develop a support plan for Fisheries Commission's implementation of the strategy
- Develop a sustainability framework for the Network

Expected outcomes

Expected outcomes of the workshop included:

- Implementation plan for the Network for year 4
- Sustainability framework
- Replace leaders

DELIBERATIONS

The proceedings started with a statement on the purpose for the meeting by Dr Margaret Atikpo, the Fisheries Post Harvest Specialist, for the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project. She expressed her appreciation to all the members who were present and encouraged members to continuously influence their areas of work by mainstreaming the learnings from the network into their day to day work. She said we must be willing to provide support to other women who need to be empowered in order for them to boldly speak up and advocate for the needed change especially in the management of Ghana's fisheries resources.

She informed members of a USAID training she participated in earlier in the year, and reiterated USAID's commitment to Gender mainstreaming at all levels and further encouraged members to effectively play their part in order to empower both men and women in the fisheries value chain to clearly understand their roles.

Adisa Owusu, initiated the meeting proceedings by briefing members on why the Network was formed and its functions. She explained that, the gender objectives which contribute to the project goal of ending overfishing and rebuilding targeted stocks is to improve the process of fisheries management by allowing men and women to have equal opportunities as fisheries co-managers. Thus strengthening civil society organizations including fishermen and fish processing/trading associations to solve problems through open and transparent communications and shared decision making is the appropriate way forward.

The broad aim of the network is to establish a gender responsive collective of women and men in the fisheries sector in order to promote gender mainstreaming through the exchange of information, experiences, best practices and policy dialogue on gender equality with particular focus on women, youth and the marginalized.

According to the framework, to promote its objectives, the gender network shall undertake (but not limited to) the following activities:

- Peer review and sharing of best practices
- Documentation of best practices
- Formation of working groups on specific issues
- Advisory and technical support to network members/partners
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The Network has a governance structure made up of 7 committee members who will steer its affairs.

Year 3 Gender Work in Review

With support from the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project, the Gender team trained Zonal fisheries officers of the Fisheries Commission on the Fisheries Gender Mainstreaming Strategy developed for the fisheries sector, so they also reach out to the fishery council and other fishery associations and provide support towards implementing the strategy.

The project also provided some level of support to NAFPTA members in the Central Region, by training them on leadership, conflict management and group dynamics; management support to NAFPTA executives at district and regional levels and knowledge sharing/transfer.

The project carried out interventions towards increasing women's participation in decision making through the provision of co-management platforms, and inclusion of women in fishery resource management. The gender team also focused more on men to bring about women inclusion.

The project provided training support of some beneficiaries on MSMEs business skills training, hygienic fish handling training, How nam Dialogue training of trainers and training

on gender fisheries policy / advocacy towards strengthening fish processing groups in the Central region.

The team also provided support to implementing partners, by providing gender based trainings, the gender policy and mainstreaming learnings on the field. The coordination of the Gender network – WhatsApp platform and semi-annual meetings.

On discussions on the successes, challenges and learnings from year 3 work by the project, a number of issues were highlighted.

The gender analysis carried out by the gender team revealed distinct roles played by men and women in fisheries. Partners and other fisheries stakeholders are more aware of their personal stereotyping of these gender roles.

At the Community level – men have been sensitized on the need to involve women in decisions concerning the management of the fishery resources.

Working with fisheries associations as mediums for advocacy against illegal fishing practices have been challenging as the fishermen continuously complain that without these practices, they are not able to make any catches and therefore make huge losses. The representatives from GIFA explained that, the use of chemicals for fishing is very minimal within their sector but accepted that light fishing is prevalent and may not be stopped in the near future unless pragmatic steps are taken to control the trawlers.

Discussions on the need for the fishermen to be fair with processors and provide quality fish for processors was not conclusively discussed and members agreed there was a need for some level of dialogue between the GIFA and MoFAD to define them as small scale or large scale fishers.

A discussion also ensued on the increase in artisanal fishers into the industry and the absence of control mechanisms to limit the numbers and even controlling canoe sizes, as there is evidence that some canoes are even larger than inshore vessels. Overcapacity of artisanal fisheries on Ghana's coastal waters is a major contribution to the reduced levels of fish catch by fishermen and needs to be regulated.

The Inshore representatives explained that, most fishers on the waters are the artisanal fishers, who are barely regulated. These fishers are rated as small scale and therefore benefit from a number of subsidies that makes it easier for them to operate. He said other vessel owners like the inshore sub-sector do not benefit from any of these opportunities and that is why in order to compete effectively, they also resort to light fishing, which is evidently practiced by the artisanal fishers too. They stated that if GIFA is given such support and introduced to better methods of fishing they will also desist from light fishing. On this discussion members proposed the need for a needs assessment into the various classifications of the fisheries industry towards ensuring that all fishers are accorded the level of support needed.

The issue of identifying fish caught with chemicals was also discussed at length. Fisheries Commission is introducing some easy to use testers that could be used to check the fish at the landing sites, but the testers are few and have still not been made available to zonal officers at the landing sites. Members agreed it would be best to study the traditional ways of identifying such fish and providing trainings for fishers who may not have this knowledge. Also there should be periodic testing of fish from various landing site to ensure compliance at the beaches. This should be enforced by MOFAD and the Fisheries Commission.

The lack of enforcement of fisheries laws was also discussed at length and political influence was the major cause identified. It was suggested that there was the need for effective

coordination between politicians and traditional leaders towards effecting compliance and enforcement of fisheries laws. Offenders should be used as change leaders or watchmen to influence their colleagues to desist from illegalities.

Ida Awuviri from the Gender Ministry also suggested the involvement of the Ministry of Education towards the structuring of a simple training system for fishers on fisheries laws. She said the mode of delivery to target beneficiaries is essential and needs to be done correctly. She related it to a bottom up approach where the target people having knowledge on the pros and cons of their activities, affects leaders and advocates for change.

Year 4 Gender Work and Role of Members

Benedicta Avega of SNV led this session. She presented the activity plan for year 4 as follows:

Table 1. Year 4 Gender Activity Plan for SFMP

IR 5.0 Gender
<i>Assessment and documentation of progress on mainstreaming gender in fisheries sector</i>
Gender Impact Assessment on SFMP’s interventions so far
Validation workshop on Assessment
<i>Mainstreaming the gender strategy in the fisheries commission</i>
Annual meeting of Gender Network (1 meeting)
Training of MOFAD/FC national and regional staff on Gender mainstreaming strategy
Coaching support to FC on the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (The Gender Desk for FC)
Leadership and Conflict Management training (Hownam Dialogue) for Volta and Greater Accra Regions
Coaching for Partners using gender lens checklist for DAA, SNV and CEWEFIA (FON, DQF, Hen Mpoano)

Based on the above, members discussed the various activities and with reference to the outcome of the previous year’s annual meeting some proposals were made towards the role of members in implementing the above activities and also support FC to implement the Fisheries Gender Mainstreaming Strategy.

Members agreed that there will be a need for members to make inputs into the impact assessment tool and participate in the validation workshop on the assessment. The other roles discussed were monitoring and evaluation of both the project and fisheries commission’s work on mainstreaming gender into the sector. Also, the Network shall provide coaching support to the Fisheries Commission towards implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Fisheries Sector.

Members further advised that Network members should be included in the training for MOFAD Regional and National staff.

A proposed implementation plan for the operations of the Network in Year 4 was developed as follows:

Table 2. Activity Plan for Network

ROLE OF NETWORK	RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION
Periodic dialogues between policy makers and other stakeholders - The Network will organize a dialogue between MOFAD and the Inshore sector. - Mainstream gender concerns into the F2F platform and involve Network members	Governing committee and Fisheries Commission
Capacity support to the FC Gender Focal Person	MoGCSP and the Governing Committee
FGNET should be part of the development of an implementation plan for the GMS to ensure ownership FGNET should be part of the periodic review of the GMS to meet current situation Yearly performance review meetings	Governing committee

(Mensah-Kutin *et al*, 2016)

According to the FC representatives, Tiwaa Amoah and Salaudeen Mustapha, the Fisheries Commission has budgeted to implement the first phase of the Strategy (1st two strategic objectives) under the West African Regional Fisheries Development Program (WARFP) funded by the World Bank.

Activity 1: Review of all MOFAD/FC programs to include gender. Gender Ministry was selected as the important collaborator. The Gender representative, Ida, advised the governing committee to present a formal letter to the Gender Ministry on this issue to request their support. The Network’s role will be to provide monitoring and advisory support. Members also reiterated the need for a detailed plan by the FC on how the first phase will be implemented.

Activity 2: The creation of a Gender Unit within MOFAD/FC. The FC representative informed members that the Gender Unit will be hosted by the Post-Harvest Unit of the commission in the interim till a main unit is created. Also, Post-Harvest Unit staff will double as Gender focal persons both at the National office and the regional offices. Members discussed the need to have Gender focal persons at all levels of the FC’s operations including the zonal level. This is required to ensure direct mainstreaming of gender actions at the community level. Members also advised that the roles of the focal persons should be clearly written in order for focal persons to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Madam Victoria the Gender Focal Person at WIAD said, WIAD has gender focal persons at all levels and is willing to support FC personnel to carry out their activities. She further explained that it is equally important to have gender desks at all the MMDAs and it is always important to clearly designate roles to the various gender desk officers to understand their scope of work. She said all Fisheries Zonal officers can also double as Gender focal persons

in the various zones and explained the need for continuous monitoring by the National and Regional desk officers to ensure adequate implementation of the Mainstreaming Strategy, especially now that there is funding available.

These changes in the roles of staff should be incorporated into the program review process under Activity 1.

The GMS Checklist and its Application in Monitoring and Evaluation

Adisa Owusu, took all members through the checklist and explained its relevance in helping members to effectively mainstream gender in their work. This is presented in Table 3.

Discussions on knowledge information, such as statistics; number of men and women, age and impact levels of interventions provided brought up three important themes;

- Difference in resource flow to men and women
- Impact of interventions on men and women
- Unintended consequences of interventions must also be assessed

Dr. Queronica, the consultant for NAFPTA explained unintended consequences. She gave an example of the Hunger Project, which provided credit facilities for women to expand their businesses to become economically stable and empowered. The project objective was achieved but there were unintended consequences. Post project evaluation found out that divorce rates increased during and after the project term and most cases were attributed to the fact that the women were economically empowered.

Thus, if unintended consequences had been planned for initially, there would have been an effort by the project to train women beneficiaries to be able to manage their empowered state in order to ensure positive benefits and not negative ones.

The need to understand the difference in resource flow to men and women and the impact of the variable support provided is essential in order to ensure that each gender is adequately supported in their various roles.

Table 3. Gender Mainstreaming Checklist

Key area	Checklist
Participation	Are all stakeholders given equal chance to participate in decision making? Have extra effort been made to include the marginalized (men and women) in decision making processes? Have extra provisions been made for nursing mothers, pregnant women and marginalized groups to participate effectively?
Allocation of resources	Is resource allocation gender equitable? Does it consider the likely impact that resource allocations have on women/men and boys/girls?
Knowledge and information	Has gender disaggregated data been collected? Gender disaggregated information should be gathered in all field research. The information should be validated to curb the tendency of placing premium on men's views only. The validation process should be carried out separately for men and women.
Responsibilities	Are both women and men made responsible for the planning and implementation of fisheries management? Project interventions should challenge the traditional roles of men and women, when the traditional roles exclude women from participating in decisions affecting fisheries in their communities.

(Okyere Nyako *et al*, 2016)

Sustainability of the Network beyond SFMP (A host organization)

According to the framework for the Network, the following efforts will be made to ensure the sustainability of the network:

- The use of the social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc) to discuss relevant issues relative to GENDER AND FISHERIES. The scope of issues for discussion should not be limited to SFMP.
- Establish multi-cultural discussions on Gender related topics generating serious contention.
- Partners and stakeholders should be open and willing to share information, including gender related success stories with the team

The members were grouped into 4, to further discuss opportunities for sustaining the network and where possible select a host organization.

Group 1 proceedings:

1. Members discussed the need to retain the WhatsApp page and revive it, by involving more vocal people and have 4 active administrators who will steer discussions on the page. The page should be reviewed every 6 months to take out redundant members and include more active members. Discussions and meetings could be organized on the WhatsApp page. Administrators must give clear rules for managing discussions on the page and must be active to ensure all members adhere to these rules. Sanctions must also be clearly spelt out for un-allowed posted information; such as members who post un-allowed information for three times should be taken off the page.
2. There is a need to create a Facebook page, where member organizations' information could be advertised and it could serve as an advocacy page for the network on gender issues.

3. The need for a blog for the Network. This could serve as a resource platform for Gender where members could post important research documents and reports.
4. Send gender based information through telecommunication networks to keep subscribers informed of their gender roles and opportunities.
5. The group suggested that Hen Mpoano should host the Network.

Group 2 proceedings:

1. Formalize and officially register the Network
2. Form a secretariat for the network
3. Agree to have meetings where no allowances will be paid.
4. Members should co-host the meetings

Group 3 proceedings:

1. MOFAD/FC should lead and coordinate the activities of the Network
2. Register the Network to enable it get funding opportunities
3. The need for regular meetings of the network, at least once every week
4. Draft a constitution or rules and regulations to guide activities of the network
5. The network should develop annual work plans to be implemented by the members
6. Develop proposals to request for funding for the network
7. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the network to inform on follow up actions

Group 4 proceedings:

1. Members should be given roles and responsibilities towards making the management of the network participatory
2. Identify key members to keep social media (WhatsApp and Facebook) active
3. Develop information materials such as illustrative pamphlets, flyers etc
4. Develop a fund raising strategy
 - Dues
 - Institutional support
 - Token from fish processors and traders

Coordinating Committee

According to the governing framework document, the Network shall be governed by a 7-member committee and the committee has the opportunity to steer the affairs of the Network for a period of one year. Unfortunately the first committee was voted into office last year December, 2016, but due of lack of funding the committee didn't function in its capacity, thus members agreed to allow the committee, to oversee the affairs of the Network for this year's term.

The committee was charged to have periodic meetings and effectively coordinate the implementation of the activity plan for the Network for next year. The committee members had 2 members who needed to be replaced. These absent members were representative of the Fisheries Commission, and the representative for Daasgift Quality Foundation. They were replaced with Tiwaa Amoah for the Fisheries Commission and Francisca Atuluk for the Gender Ministry, who will be assisted by her colleague Ida Awuviri where necessary.

CONCLUSIONS

The Fisheries Gender Network serves as a platform for information sharing and a support system to members towards mainstreaming Gender into their activities. The knowledge on gender roles in fisheries management has become essential to the economic and social development of the Fisheries Sector. The important actors, fishermen and processors are the direct indigenous users of the fishery resources, they therefore need to understand their roles and identify the opportunities available to them for maximum benefits and the collective growth of the industry.

Members expect to see more activity this year and there is much hope that the committee shall be committed to their roles and provide the needed leadership.

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