



REPUBLIC OF GHANA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE
DEVELOPMENT (MoFAD)

**CO-MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR
THE FISHERIES SECTOR**



November 2020



The Government of Ghana is fully committed to the implementation of this Co-Management Policy developed with inputs from key stakeholders of the fisheries sector to enhance decision-making processes towards the sustainable management of the sector.

Citation: Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (2020)
Co-Management Policy for the Fisheries Sector, Government of Ghana pp41

[Text in this document is based on the officially gazetted
Co-Management Policy for the Fisheries Sector, published on November 05, 2020](#)

Photo: Artisanal boats docked at a landing site in the Central Region of Ghana

In Ghana, the fisheries sector provides livelihoods for an estimated 10 % of the population, and 60% of the dietary protein needs for the average Ghanaian. The sector also contributes to food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, and foreign exchange earnings. Government therefore, places high importance on the effective and efficient management of this sector. The Management of the fisheries sector is the responsibility of Government through the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD) and the Fisheries Commission (FC). The management style has been that of a top-down approach with little involvement of resource users in the local communities in decision making.

However, global trends and innovations in fisheries management have influenced the adoption of co-management, usually a bottom-up approach, as a management strategy. Co-management is broadly defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations as partnership arrangement between government and the local community of resource users, sometimes also connected with agents such as NGOs and research institutions, and other resource stakeholders, to share the responsibility and authority for the management of a resource.

This process has been globally viewed as an acceptable best practice of fisheries governance and management where fishers and other resource users are empowered as active members in the resource management team balancing rights and responsibilities and working in partnership with government. Co-management takes many forms from very little power sharing where government generally consults with resource users on proposed rules, to systems where management decisions regarding the utilization of the resources (how to fish and how much fish to harvest) are made primarily by user groups.

The reasons why co-management is effective are several, and the three major ones relating to Ghana are as follows: First, resource users have practical day to-day local knowledge of the the fishery and can propose practical ways in which the resource can be managed based on their unique understanding of the fishery. Second, if resource users are developing the regulations, then the regulations will be viewed as more legitimate rather than being imposed, and the likelihood of high compliance with the rules will be improved. Third co-management can provide opportunities for management styles that are precautionary, adaptive and flexible.

Over the last two decades in Ghana, there has been a shift in resource governance style with the establishment of the Community Based Fisheries Management Committees (CBFMCs) in 1997 which had a broader scope that recognised the participation of fishers/resource users in shared decision-making. Although the approach was a consultative form of co-management, the CBFMCs were not fully harnessed due to a number of challenges including lack of a clear definition of authority or jurisdiction, lack of administrative clarity to draw the interest of key stakeholders

including MMDAs in coastal areas, inadequate capacity development and inadequate resources (e.g. technical and logistical).

From the foregoing, a fresh approach to management is needed that can contribute to addressing these challenges by delegating the fishery management responsibilities and authority to resource users and other stakeholders through a pluralistic management approach to each co-management unit or area with clear financing, capacity enhancing and operational framework.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development was established in 2013 and maintained by the Executive Instrument (E.I. 28) establishing the Civil Service (Ministries) in 2017. The Ministry, together with the Fisheries Commission, the implementing agency, is committed to a pluralistic approach to managing Ghana's fisheries resources to achieve the mandate of their establishments. The objective set forth in the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Plan as well as other existing national policy plans is to identify co-management as a key element for the as a key element for the management of the fisheries sector and the sustainable management of Ghana's fisheries resources.

To this end, this Fisheries Co-Management Policy has been developed to provide a roadmap for Ghana's fisheries management that transitions from a basically top-down consultative management framework to an approach that provides for some delegation of authority to resource users and other stakeholders in the decision-making processes. There is no one right way for implementing co-management policies and the approach taken in Ghana must consider the unique ecological, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the fisheries industry.

This Policy also provides an overview of Ghana's experience to date and lessons learned concerning fisheries co-management including assessment of the current policy and legal regime. It lays out the definition for co-management, the policy goal and objectives as well as the guiding principles for the Policy and its implementation. The Policy further provides the implementation arrangement including institutional roles and responsibilities that ensure a flexible framework that can adapt co-management systems to the unique nature of the various fisheries under the nation's jurisdiction.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD), under its authority to develop policies, has developed this co-management policy for implementation by the Fisheries Commission. This Policy is hereby approved and the Fisheries Commission is hereby directed to give full effect to its implementation. This Co-Management policy will remain in effect until revised or revoked by the Minister responsible for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development.

Approved:



Hon. Mrs. Elizabeth Aboley Quaye (MP)

Minister responsible for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development

Date: 18th November 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD) acknowledges the invaluable contributions of key stakeholders and Development Partners towards the development of this Policy. The efforts and inputs of key stakeholders especially fisher associations in ensuring the development of this Policy through the meaningful contributions they made at various stakeholder meetings during the preparatory process is well acknowledged.

The Ministry appreciates the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) in particular for providing technical and financial supports, and for bringing together stakeholders in the fisheries sector who contributed to the process of developing this Policy.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EBM	Ecosystem-Based Management
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy
FASDP	Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Development Plan
FC	Fisheries Commission
FCWC	Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea
FDF	Fisheries Development Fund
FMP	Fisheries Management Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIFA	Ghana Inshore Fishermen Association
GITA	Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
GNICFC	Ghana National Inland Canoe Fishermen Council
IGF	Internally Generated Funds
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
LI	Legislative Instrument
LUSPA	Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MoFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NFAP	National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NM	Nautical Miles
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SMTDP	Sector Medium Term Development Plan
STC	Science Technical Committee
TURF	Territorial Use Rights in Fisheries
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UG	University of Ghana
UN	United Nations
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Project
WRI	Water Research Institute

PREFACE	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF ACRONYMS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
CHAPTER TWO: THE CO-MANAGEMENT POLICY	4
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 Rationale	4
2.3 Policy Goal and Objectives	4
2.4 Guiding Principles	5
2.5 Policy and legal context	7
CHAPTER THREE: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	9
3.1 Introduction	9
3.2 Implementation Plan	9
3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation	9
3.4 Review of the Policy	9
3.5 Financing the Policy	10
3.6 Governance structure	10
3.6.1 Apex fisheries co-management institutions	11
3.6.2 The Ministerial Advisory Board	12
3.7 The Scientific and Technical Committee	12
3.8 The Fishery Management Areas or Units	13
3.8.1 Large Scale Management Units	13
3.8.2 Small Scale Management Units	14
3.9 Co-Management Committees	16
3.9.1 Small Scale Co-Management Committees	16
3.9.2 Large Scale Co-Management Committees	18
3.10 Planning Sub-Committees	21

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3.11	Appointment and Tenure of Office	21
3.12	Institutional Roles and Responsibilities	22
3.12.1	Co-management Committees	22
3.12.2	MoFAD and the Fisheries Commission	23
3.12.3	Local Government Units	24
3.12.4	Academia and Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations	25
3.12.5	Traditional institutions and women	25
3.12.6	Industrial and semi-industrial fishing sub-sectors in co-management	26
3.13	Landing Beach Committees	27
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION		28
4.1.	Conclusion	28
GLOSSARY OF TERMS		29
CONCEPTS		32

1.1 Background

The fisheries sector in Ghana provides livelihoods for an estimated 10% of the population who are directly or indirectly employed within the fisheries and aquaculture value chain. Fish constitutes an important source of animal protein in the diet of Ghanaians by providing 60% of the animal protein consumed in Ghana. Significantly, this figure exceeds by almost three folds, the FAO estimate of 22% in sub-Saharan Africa, demonstrating the importance of fish for food and nutrition security in Ghana. The sector also accounts for an average of 1.0% of Ghana's annual Gross Domestic Product.

However, both marine and inland fishery resources are increasingly showing signs of full exploitation or overexploitation with decline in fish landings. The decline, which is leading to a widening gap between fish demand and supply, is mainly attributable to excess capacity and open access to the fishery resources, especially in the semi-industrial and artisanal segments of the sector. Many contemporary approaches to addressing the challenges of open access to natural resources, in an effort to attaining sustainable management, prescribe partnership with and entrusting decision making and regulatory activities to local communities and stakeholders who depend directly on the exploitation of those resources for their livelihoods. Co-management has been identified as one of the most effective and efficient strategies in ensuring a shared responsibility between government and resource users.

Over the years, Ghana has been managing its fishery resources using various forms (formal and informal) of co-management, including government-supported community-based groups and other collaborative arrangements involving government, resource users and other key stakeholders in the fisheries sector, for fisheries management. A similar form of sharing management responsibility with stakeholders was promoted by the Fisheries Department (now Fisheries Commission) in the Community-Based Fisheries Management Committees (CBFMCs) implemented in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with chief fishermen serving as chairpersons of the committees. These CBFMCs were not fully harnessed due to a number of challenges including lack of a clear legislative framework and definition of authority or jurisdiction, lack of administrative clarity to draw the interest of key stakeholders including MMDAs in coastal areas, inadequate capacity development, and inadequate resources (e.g. technical and logistical).

This Co-Management Policy has been developed based on the experiences and the successes from traditional management, government supported Community-Based Groups

and other collaborative management arrangements between government and stakeholders. The key issues that this policy seeks to address are listed and elaborated below:

1. Low involvement of local communities in fisheries management planning and decision making

The Policy recognises that there is the need to transition from the current top-down management approach where fishers are brought in late in the planning and decision-making processes, to an approach that involves fisheries stakeholders and local communities from the beginning of these processes. The current top-down approach has not resulted in, or enhanced, sustainable fisheries management in Ghana.

2. Open access to the fisheries resources

The policy strives to entrust control and access to the fisheries resources to both central government and local communities as well as associations for various management units.

3. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

It is expected that IUU fishing activities will be better regulated at the local level with the involvement of trained community-based committees and fisheries associations in collaboration with the Fisheries Enforcement Unit (FEU) of the Fisheries Commission.

4. Inadequate institutional capacity at the central level of management

By delegating responsibilities to communities and fisher folk associations, the capacities for management and achieving the Fisheries Commission's mandates will be expanded.

5. Low level of awareness and education on the implications of using unauthorized methods and unapproved gears in fishing

Most fishers consider the sea and rivers as reservoirs for inexhaustible fisheries resources and therefore there is the need for minimal or no management interventions. By empowering fisheries resource users with mandates for management and control of access, they become more aware of, and interested in, how their actions affect their catches and income.

6. Poor performance of existing central management

Following the poor performance of existing central management arrangements to ensure the sustainable management of fisheries resources, there has been growing concern to delegate some fishery management responsibilities to resource users and other stakeholders.

This Policy is also designed to transform the top-down consultative management framework into a pluralistic approach that will ensure enhanced delegation of authority to key stakeholders in the decision-making processes to help achieve fisheries development and management objectives including but not limited to:

- (a) controlling fishing access in all sectors to ensure sustainable fisheries
- (b) ensuring harvest control strategies to enhance sustainable fishing
- (c) preventing overfishing, and rebuilding overfished stocks, and
- (d) restoring and maintaining improved profitability in the fisheries sector.

This Fisheries Co-Management Policy document is structured into three (3) chapters. Chapter One provides the Background of the Policy, Chapter Two defines the Co-Management Policy by providing insight into the concept, including the policy and legal framework, guiding principles, goal and objectives of the Policy. The Implementation Arrangements is provided for under Chapter Three. There is also a Glossary section where various terminologies used in the policy document are explained.

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter highlights the rationale for the policy and its associated guiding principles, among other considerations, that provide the policy framework.

2.2 Rationale

This Fisheries Co-Management Policy is designed to:

- (a) Provide the framework for consultative stakeholder engagement and decision making with respect to defining strategic measures for rejuvenating the fisheries sector with active participation and defined roles for all stakeholders, i.e. shared roles and responsibilities for management and enforcement.
- (b) Promote voluntary compliance with management regulations, standards and interventions by fishers.
- (c) Establish and empower stakeholder-led institutions that facilitate sustainable fisheries management for clearly defined management units.
- (d) Facilitate mobilization of resources for co-management interventions.
- (e) Develop effective local rules by combining local knowledge with scientific and technical knowledge of government agencies.

2.3 Policy Goal and Objectives

The goal of this Fisheries Co-Management Policy is to achieve enhanced participation of the community of fisheries resource users in fisheries management through the delegation of management decision making from central management authority to local management authorities. More specifically, the objectives of the Policy are to:

- (a) Develop the modalities and institutional framework to delegate governance and management authority and responsibility to resource users
- (b) Create and develop capacities of co-management units to empower the units to develop and implement management plans and enforce national fisheries laws

- (c) Develop linkages among local stakeholders for enhanced co-management and learning at all levels, and
- (d) Increase adherence to fisheries laws and regulations.

2.4 Guiding Principles

The implementation of this Policy shall be guided by the general principles of transparency, participation, accountability, equity, trust and respect. The implementation of the Policy is also underpinned by the following Co-Management-specific principles:

- (a) **Scale:** Co-management institutions need to be designed to fit the scale at which various fisheries need to be managed. The design and make-up of co-management committees will be based on the determination of the appropriate fisheries management areas and associated stocks, taking into consideration principles of ecosystems-based management, and the stock range and other practicable considerations for determining manageable fish stock units. Co-management institutions will be tailored to each of these management units and ecosystem context, taking into consideration socio-economic and cultural factors in determining their make-up and functions.
- (b) **Simplicity and flexibility:** In the design of co-management structures, there is a need for simplicity and flexibility in the composition of management committees, and for delegated decision-making systems that allow for regulations to be implemented quickly, for instance between seasons. There is also the need to have effective adaptive management systems that can be easily integrated into the traditional contexts of Ghana, and affordable for stakeholders to sustain past donor projects. Rules are not necessarily meant to be static but can change based on changing circumstances.
- (c) **Best practices in fisheries management approaches:** In managing the resources, available best knowledge and practices including the precautionary principle, adaptive management and ecosystem-based management approaches would be applied to guide the development of management plans by fisheries co-management institutions.

- (d) **Delegated authorities:** De-concentration and delegation of management authority will be based on the scale of the management units. Some species will require international cooperation and national level management (e.g. large or small pelagic fish species). Other species can be managed at the community, regional or national level (e.g. shellfish, some demersal species). For fisheries requiring management at the national scale due to the extent of the fish stocks and range of the species, while such management will be retained at the national level, the principle of regional equivalency can also allow for some delegated regional decision making within a national framework. Consistent with subsection (3) of section 42 of the Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625) the Fisheries Commission will collaborate with such State agencies it considers appropriate for the implementation of each fishery plan including consultations with local government authorities, traditional authorities and other national agencies as deemed appropriate for each management unit. Local government units will also work with the Fisheries Commission and other authorities to coordinate and harmonize implementation of approved plans in accordance with subsection (5) of section 12 of the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936).
- (e) **Decentralization:** The Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625) and Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) do not devolve the management of fisheries resources to the districts. Decentralization to local government units, such as District Assemblies, is not considered feasible given the current challenges of implementing decentralized authorities already granted to the districts and due to a lack of technical capacity for fisheries management among district assembly personnel. For marine fisheries and maritime areas, migration of fish stocks and fishers is another factor that works against decentralization to local government units. In addition, District waters or local areas of maritime and aquatic jurisdiction would need to be delineated for each local government authority, and therefore not considered practical. While decentralization is not a policy choice at this time, local government authorities are to participate and play various roles as appropriate in fisheries management and, as noted above, under the mandates in Act 625 and Act 936. Therefore, it is not the intent of this policy to empower Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies or Regional Coordinating Councils to manage fisheries resources.
- (f) **Roles of traditional authorities:** Given their degree of respect and influence in the fishing communities, traditional authorities must play specific roles in the co-management process. This process of empowerment of traditional authorities must be accompanied by a careful integration of conventional co-management approaches with traditional beliefs and practices.

(g) Linkages with existing institutions, national and international initiatives:

Co-management processes and institutions should build on existing forms of functional or traditional management where they exist and have some degree of efficacy (e.g. the Volta Estuary Clam Fisheries Management Unit) rather than creating new or competing institutions. In many cases, informal traditional systems can be strengthened by granting legitimacy to traditional practices through codification and endorsement of the practices by the Fisheries Commission. Co-Management must also link upwards to regional cooperation and bodies for fisheries management (e.g. the Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC)), the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

(h) Subsidiary approach to co-management rules and fines: Rules established by co-management groups cannot contravene national laws or change penalties established by law but can establish additional rules and fines to be applied in the fishery management area and collected by the committee as long as they do not contravene national laws and established penalties. It is the Fisheries Commission's responsibility to audit local plans to ensure compliance with national laws.

2.5 Policy and legal context

The development and implementation of this Co-Management Policy is guided by the National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework (Agenda for Jobs) which operationalises the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2017-2024). The Plan also takes into account a number of international and national policies, key among which are:

- (a) The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations;
- (b) The AU Agenda 2063 "the Africa we Want"
- (c) The National Environment Policy
- (d) The Ghana National Climate Change Policy
- (e) The Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II)
- (f) The National Marine Fisheries Management Plan (2015-2019), and
- (g) The Sector Medium-Term Development Plan (2018-2021).

The Policy is also hinged on the following legal frameworks:

- (a) The Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625)
- (b) The Fisheries (Amendment) Act, 2014 (Act 880)
- (c) The Fisheries Regulations, 2010 (L.I. 1968)
- (d) The Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations, 2015 (L.I. 2217)
- (e) The Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462)
- (f) The Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), and
- (g) The National Premix Fuel Committee Regulations, 2016 (L.I. 2233).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the implementation arrangements for the Co-Management Policy. It outlines the institutional framework, the governance structure, identification of institutions and their respective roles.

3.2 Implementation Plan

The Fisheries Commission (FC) has the primary responsibility for the implementation of this Policy with ministerial oversight by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD). An annual operational plan will be developed with the active involvement of all stakeholders to implement the Policy. The operational plan will outline specific activities with measurable targets and implemented within several pilot management units. This Policy is to be piloted in some selected fishing communities and within selected sub-sectors of the fisheries sector before being fully rolled out. The implementation of the policy within the pilot areas will start with awareness creation, capacity building and formation of management committees and community watch volunteer committees. The Fisheries Commission will implement the plan through annual budgeted work plans.

3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

MoFAD and FC will set up a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan to determine the baseline conditions and data, as well as collate specific indicators that will inform the review of the policy and the scaling up strategy.

3.4 Review of the Policy

The Fisheries Co-Management Policy shall be reviewed periodically in the light of emerging information and challenges from implementation. The policy review shall be informed by monitoring activities and experience gained from implementation. Stakeholders involved in the implementation of this Policy and their roles and responsibilities are context dependent and shall change over time. In this regard, the Policy will be reviewed after initial implementation over a two-year period.

3.5 Financing the Policy

MoFAD and FC are expected to contribute towards the implementation of this Policy through their annual programmes and work plans. To ensure ownership of the implementation process, resource users and key stakeholders will also be encouraged to contribute towards the implementation of the Policy. In this regard, the possible sources of funding for the implementation of the Policy are as follows:

- (a) Landing fees paid to the Co-Management Committee and established as part of an approved co-management plan
- (b) Local fines imposed on offenders
- (c) Proceeds from Premix Fuel sales by the Landing Beach Committees (LBCs)
- (d) Contributions from Fisheries Associations
- (e) Support from stakeholders such as CSOs, development partners, etc.
- (f) District Assembly Internally Generated Funds, (IGFs) or establishment of a special Local Fisheries Development Account supported from fisheries sector generated revenues, and
- (g) Private sector donations.

The funds generated from these sources would be used to support the establishment and operation of Co-Management Committees, develop the capacity of the Committees and facilitate the preparation of management plans by the Co-Management Committees.

3.6 Governance Structure

Central to the implementation and success of this Fisheries Co-Management Policy is the delegation of authority and mandates as well as the assignment of responsibilities to various institutions and management units. The governance structure in the organogram below (Figure 1) depicts the delegation of fisheries management authority from an apex body to lower management units. FC shall be the apex body at operational level and shall delegate authority, assign responsibilities and rights, and allocate resources depending on the complexity and scale of a management unit in fisheries co-management.

3.6.1 Apex fisheries co-management institutions

The apex fisheries co-management institution is Cabinet, followed by MoFAD at policy and strategic levels, and the Fisheries Commission at the operational level. Cabinet will provide approval for the Policy and for its review. The Ministry will formulate, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Policy at the strategic level.

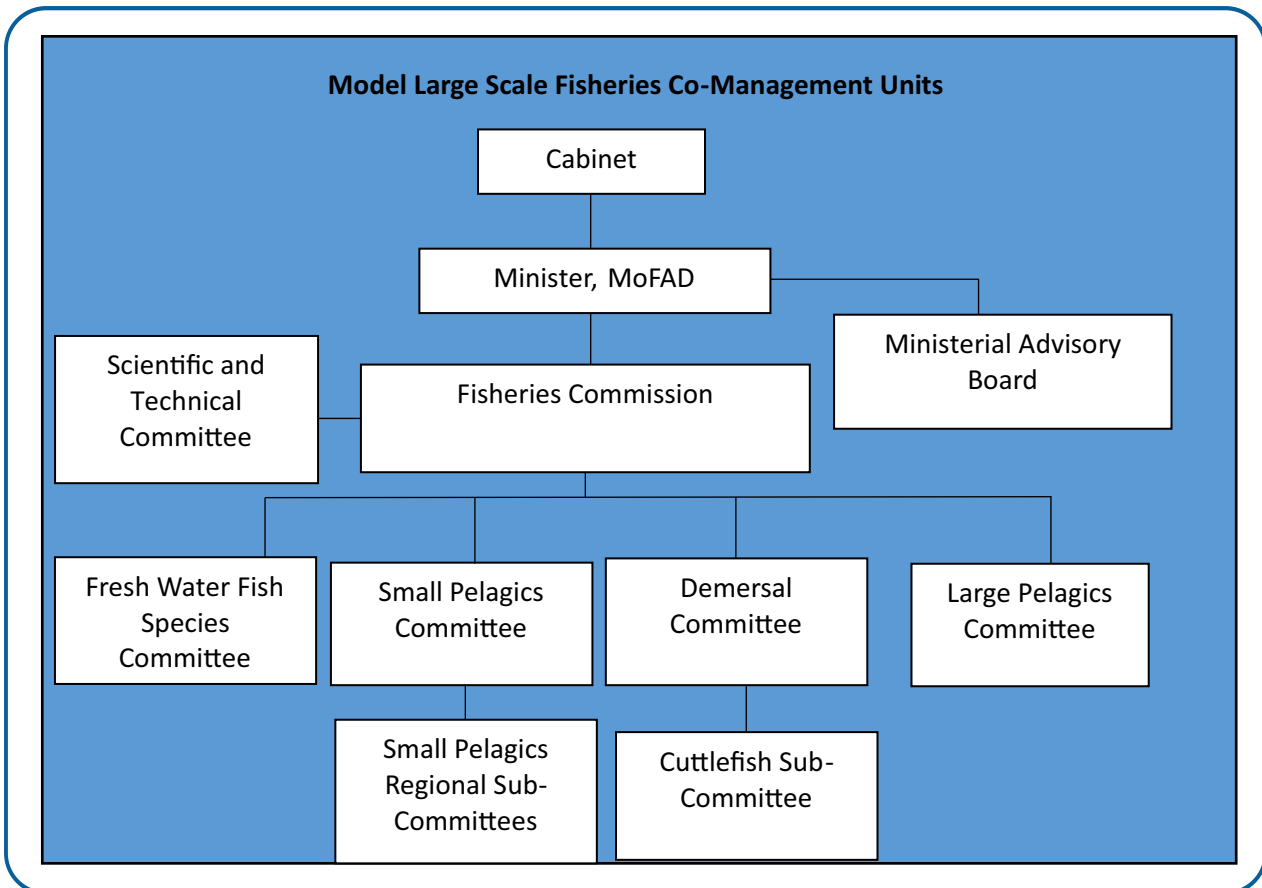


Figure 1: Model Large Scale Fisheries Co-Management Units

Figure 1 illustrates types of Committees for Large Scale Fishery Management Units that may be established under the Fisheries Commission. The Units shall evolve over time and not be created all at once. Co-Management Committees for the purposes of resource management of marine stocks are not envisioned to be established at each landing beach to prevent the establishment of a large number of committees. Rather, the Co-Management Structures for large scale units are envisioned to have representatives of associations encompassing all resource users directly benefiting from the use of the resource, such as the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council, the National Inshore Fishermen's Association, and the National Fish Processors and Traders Association

3.6.2 The Ministerial Advisory Board

The Ministerial Advisory Board of MoFAD shall advise the Minister on strategic directions on co-management based on available evidence.

3.6.3 The Fisheries Commission

The Fisheries Commission (FC) shall be the apex body at the operational level. As the main implementing agency, FC will develop annual implementation plans, provide guidelines for setting up of Co-Management Committees and provide approval for management plans developed for any fisheries resource or management area. The Fisheries Commission will also provide support to the operations of the Co-Management Committees as well as monitor the implementation of management plans including approval for proposed guidelines or rules by the Co-Management Committees. As the lead implementing agency, FC will monitor, coordinate and evaluate the implementation plan.

3.7 The Scientific and Technical Committee

The Fisheries Commission shall establish a Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) to act as an advisory panel to the Commission and its Co-Management Committees in accordance with existing Fisheries Laws. The STC shall be chaired by the Head of the Fisheries Scientific Survey Division (FSSD) of the Fisheries Commission, or designee, and include membership from academia, the fishing industry and any other relevant institutions.

FSSD will serve as the Secretariat for the Committee. STC shall assess the status of key fish stocks that are economically of national importance, including the large and small pelagics and demersal stocks. STC shall make determinations on the status of the fish stock. STC shall set target reference points for biomass and fishing mortality to end overfishing. The Committee will make recommendations to the Fisheries Commission and the Large-Scale Co-Management Committees concerning management measures needed to rebuild stocks that are overfished and prevent overfishing of stocks that have not yet been fully exploited or are underexploited. The Committee will assist the Fisheries Commission with independent data analyses and assessment of stock levels of some important fish species in Ghanaian waters.

3.8 The Fishery Management Areas or Units

The Fisheries Commission will, in accordance with the Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625), facilitate the formation of Co-Management Committees, consisting of stakeholders including fishermen and industry players, to advise mainly on a management approach for defined fisheries resources within specific management areas.

The Fisheries Commission may delegate authority to the Co-Management Committees. The Fisheries Commission, through licensing arrangements, can provide user rights to individual fishing licence holders within these management areas. Licence holders can establish arrangements for collective management of user rights established in the individual licensing arrangements. Collective user rights via licensing, or through the approval of specific management plans, can also be granted to legally-constituted Ghanaian groups or associations or companies.

The Fisheries Commission may designate large scale fisheries units, and delegate authority to its Regional Directors to designate small scale fishery units and associated management committees for inland water bodies, lakes, rivers, lagoons and estuaries.

3.8.1 Large Scale Management Units

The designation of management units should be based on best available scientific information and expert local knowledge of fisheries user groups. Priority for establishing management units and associated co-management committees and plans should be given to the following large-scale management units:

- (a) **Large pelagics:** including tunas, sharks, marlins – for an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)-wide management area.
- (b) **Small pelagics:** including anchovies, mackerels and sardinellas – an EEZ wide management area, although the management committee can establish sub management units and committees at regional, district or other scales, including beach management units, as deemed necessary and allow designation of Territorial Use Rights in Fisheries (TURFS) to fisher groups for beach seines targeting these stocks.
- (c) **Marine demersals, shellfish and mollusks:** including finfish, shrimps, lobsters, crabs, octopus and cuttlefish - EEZ wide or regional management units.

3.8.2 Small Scale Management Units

Decentralized structures for Small Scale Fishery Management Units are described below. They are to be created on demand and over time. As there may be hundreds of community-based management committees created over time throughout the nation, care must be taken to scale up at a rate consistent with resources available and capacity of the Fisheries Commission to ensure each group and associated plan is well crafted and capacitated to ensure sustainability. This was a lesson from the previous failed community-based initiative where almost 200 committees were targeted for establishment over a few years with little consideration given to ongoing support needs and resources to sustain these groups. The rapid creation of so many committees and lack of ability of the Fisheries Commission or Districts to service these adequately was one of the reasons for the failure.

For Small Scale Management Areas or Units, Co-Management Committees can also be established for the following fisheries resources based on needs for conservation and sustainable management of associated stocks and based on requests from fishing communities, fisheries associations or groups:

- (a) **Small lakes, lagoons and estuaries:** Small lakes (e.g. Lake Bosomtwe), lagoons (e.g. Keta, Princess, Abby) and estuaries (e.g. of Volta, Pra, Ankobra) are considered as management units in themselves, but smaller management units may be considered based on sound scientific advice and local knowledge.
- (b) **Volta Lake:** Management units may be established for each stratum but can be further subdivided if deemed more practical and effective. Within each stratum, existing fisheries districts or traditional fishing areas and boundaries can also be considered as small-scale management units.
- (c) **Shellfish:** including estuarine and freshwater bivalves such as clams, oysters and cockles. These resources limited in space to the Volta and other major river systems, estuaries, and small bays and lagoons can be left to the local resource users to manage with scientific advice. Allocation of TURFS (Territorial Use Rights in Fisheries)¹ for individuals or groups of fishermen is allowed with the possibility for TURFS for beach seines in certain stretches of coastline.

¹TURFs are usually allocated to and managed by an organized group of fishermen called a Cooperative or association. Most TURF systems do not grant ownership of fishing areas. They allocate exclusive harvesting rights for one or more marine species in a specified area.

Figure 2 shows examples of models of potential community-based small-scale co-management units and associated committees.

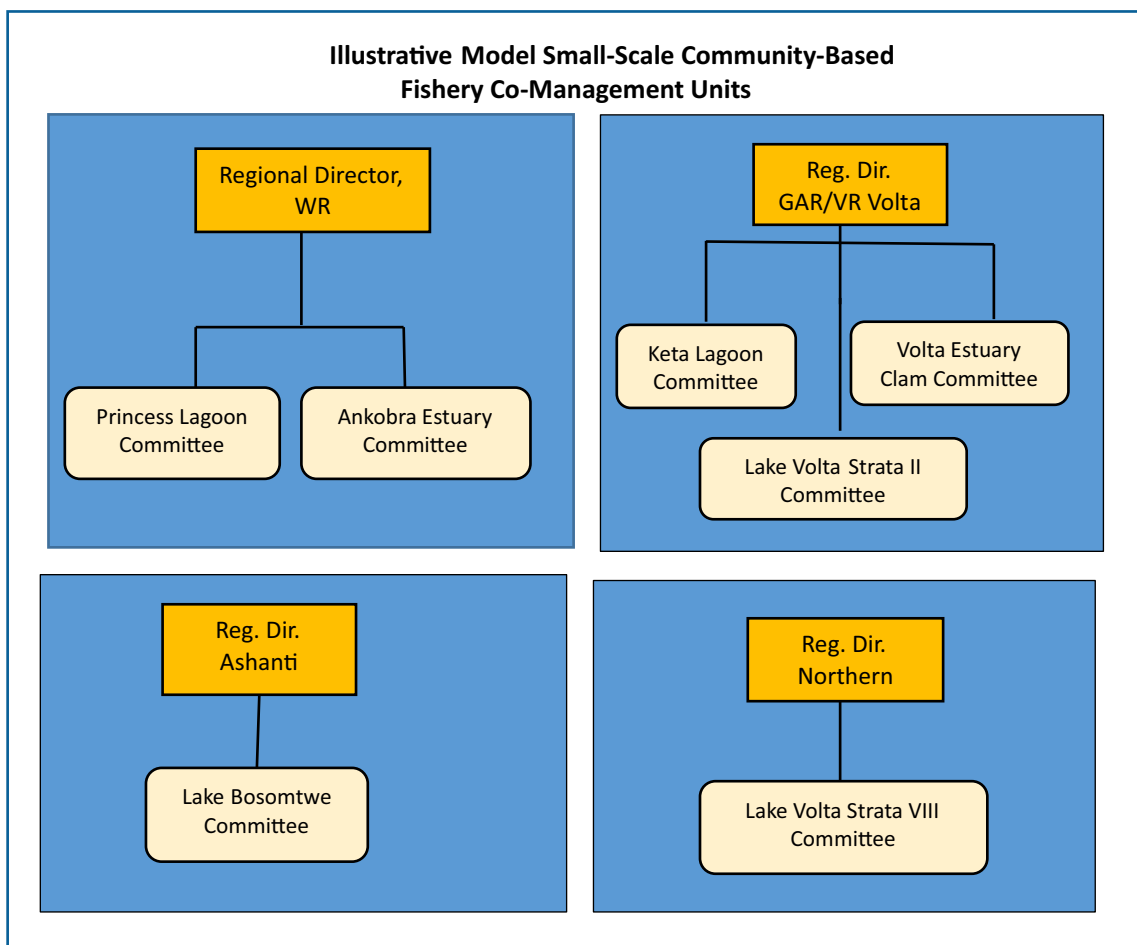


Figure 2: Model for potential small-scale fishery management units and associated committees

There is the need to create awareness and sensitization as part of the implementation to enable the estuarine and inland communities take advantage of this option. In some inland areas, co-management groups may include fishers, fish farmers and farmers using a common space which in the dry season is used for farming or grazing, and in the wet season as fishing area. This could also include mangrove harvesters, where mangrove protection as a critical fish habitat, is an important issue for management of targeted fish stocks.

Migrant fishers that enter an area for fishing seasonally but do not reside in the area must be represented on the co-management committees. The principle here is that all incumbent stakeholders that directly use or benefit economically from the resource must be included on management committees. User rights will be preserved for and granted to artisanal fisher folks for the stocks in the small-scale management units.

3.9 Co-Management Committees

Co-Management Committees will be established for management areas or units based on the need and demand as well as capacity of both the resource users and the Fisheries Commission to operate the committees.

3.9.1 Small-scale Co-Management Committees

Small-scale Co-Management Committees will be established for geographically defined and established fishery management units and associated stocks and species. For the purpose of direct ownership, the resources users will be made to establish their own co-management committees facilitated by the Fisheries Commission. In the case of small-scale fisheries units (inland, river, estuary or lagoon), the Executive Director of the Fisheries Commission, within the mandate of the Fisheries Act, can delegate to Regional Directors authority to facilitate the establishment of fishery management areas and associated community-based management committees. Establishment of local committees by the regional directors shall be reported to the Fisheries Commission. Membership on the committees should follow the guidelines below and be nominated by the user groups themselves.

Community-Based Co-Management Committees are to consist of stakeholders directly engaged in and benefiting economically from the fishery concerned. Community-Based Co-Management Committees must also have women representation. The committees should not be too large where they become too cumbersome and should not exceed fifteen (15) members. Committees may include representatives of the following stakeholders:

- (a) Fishermen from the subsectors involved in the fishery (including but not limited to fishing input owners e.g. canoe owner and/or boat owner, gear owner) and where applicable an elder/executive from an apex Canoe Fishermen Association;
- (b) Fish processors, traders and marketers; and
- (c) Other stakeholders with an interest in or with some level of jurisdiction or interest over the area are to be considered in an advisory capacity and can be included on an Advisory Committee to the community-based management committee;



Small scale fishermen on the Ankobra estuary



Small scale fisherman setting out on a fishing expedition on the River Volta

Advisory Committees are optional and involvement may depend on the circumstances. These may include but not be limited to the following members:

- a. Fishers representatives of the fishery concerned
- b. Traditional authorities with informal or traditional jurisdiction over the fishery such as the chief fisherman, and/or leader of related traders (for example *konkohemaa* in Akan areas), fish mummy or chairman or headman in the case of inland fisheries, river priest or others with traditional jurisdiction over mangroves or wetland areas
- c. A government representative, a member of the Fisheries Commission, a law enforcement representative if appropriate, or in the case of small-scale management units and community-based committees it can be a Fisheries Commission zonal officer or in the absence of a fisheries officer, a local officer of a decentralized line Ministry such as MoFA
- d. A civil society organization/ NGO with interest in natural resource management (in the case of small-scale community-based committees, it must be a CSO/NGO that has permanent presence in the area concerned)
- e. The committee must include women representing stakeholders listed above
- f. Where applicable, a representative of the canoe, industrial or semi-industrial fisheries sectors
- g. Where applicable a representative of another government agency, and
- h. If applicable, other stakeholders such as farmers, mangrove wood cutters or aquaculture operators.

3.9.2 Large-scale Co-Management Committees

Large-scale Co-Management Committees can be several and established at the national or regional levels. For example, the Fisheries Commission, a Government Agency established by the Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625), among other things, makes decisions on how Ghana's fisheries resources are managed. Section 9 of Act 625 empowers the Fisheries Commission to appoint committees it considers necessary for the effective performance of its functions and these committees could include co-management committees. The following committees can be established with representation from stakeholder groups:

(a) Small Pelagics Committee: This committee may be composed of the following institutions or groups:

- i. The Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC)
- ii. The Ghana Inshore Fishermen Association (GIFA)
- iii. The National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA)
- iv. The Fisheries Commission (FC)
- v. The Cold Store operators
- vi. The Gear importers
- vii. The Marine Police
- viii. The Civil Society Organizations, and
- ix. The Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice.

(b) Large Pelagics Committee: This committee may be composed of the following groups or institutions:

- i. The Fisheries Commission
- ii. The National Fisheries Association of Ghana
- iii. The Ghana Tuna Association
- iv. The Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
- v. The Canneries
- vi. The Cold Stores
- vii. The Fisheries Enforcement Unit
- viii. The Ghana Maritime Authority
- ix. The Ghana Revenue Authority (Customs)
- x. The Processors
- xi. The Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority
- xii. The Ghana Inshore Fishermen Association, and
- xiii. The Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice.

(c) Demersals Committee: This committee may be set up at the subnational or regional level. The committee may be composed of the following groups or institutions:

- i. The Fisheries Commission
- ii. The Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association
- iii. The Ghana Inshore Fishermen Association
- iv. The Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
- v. The Fish Processors and Traders Associations such as the National Fish Processors and Traders Association
- vi. The Central and Western Region Fishmongers Association
- vii. The Development Action Association

- viii. The Fisheries Enforcement Unit
- ix. The Ghana Maritime Authority
- x. The Canneries
- xi. The Cold Stores
- xii. The Ghana Revenue Authority (Customs)
- xiii. The Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority
- xiv. The Canneries
- xv. The Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice
- xvi. The Academia, and
- xvii. Civil Society.

Other Co-Management Committees or sub-committees deemed necessary for the management of the large-scale fisheries may also be created through the facilitation of Fisheries Commission.

3.10 Planning Sub-Committees

Planning sub-committees may be established for the purposes of developing fishery management plans for specific fishery management units and determining the makeup and structure of associated Co-Management Committees. A planning sub-committee shall be composed of stakeholders for the fishery concerned, namely, those directly fishing or economically benefiting from the fishery, and those with authority or jurisdiction within the geographic area concerned. The planning sub-committees are envisioned to be ad hoc in nature. The assignment of the planning sub-committees should end once the management plan under consideration is prepared and approved. The sub-committee should then be dissolved but its members may become members of the Co-Management Committees or Advisory Committees that are established in relation to the management plan. The Fisheries Commission will facilitate the establishment of the planning sub-committees.

3.11 Appointment and Tenure of Office

The Co-Management Committee shall elect their executives and members as follows:

- (a) Appointment to the Co-Management Committee is for a term not exceeding three years. Selection of members for appointment to the Co-Management Committee should not coincide with a presidential election year to help in depoliticising such committees. Where the Committee's mandate expires during an election year, the Committee shall stay in office until after the general elections.
- (b) A member cannot serve for more than two consecutive terms on the Co-Management Committee. In the case where a chief fisherman is the chairperson of the Co-Management Committee, the chief fisherman shall serve as an executive /advisory member to the Committee after leaving office.
- (c) The government representative serves in ex-officio capacity.
- (d) Eligibility for appointment as a member of the Co-Management Committee is solely for
 - i. active or retired fisherfolk involved in the designated fishery for community-based management committees; and
 - ii. fisherfolk and other active stakeholders with an interest in the fishery.

- (e) The make-up of the committee should be gender sensitive. A person of a gender opposite to the gender of the chairperson should be considered for the co-chairperson or vice-chairperson position.
- (f) The Chairperson and officers of the Co-Management Committee shall be elected by a majority of the members present and voting at a meeting of the Co-Management Committee convened for that purpose.
- (g) Stakeholder groups will make nominations to the Executive Director or the Regional Director of the Fisheries Commission who shall appoint the members of the Co-Management Committee from the nominees within thirty days after receiving the nominations.
- (h) For a large-scale Co-Management Committee, the Fisheries Commission shall act as the Secretariat of that Co-Management Committee.

3.12 Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

3.12.1 Co-Management Committees

The Co-Management Committee will be responsible for developing an Operational Co-Management Plan for the fishery management area and fish stocks under its jurisdiction. The operational plan will require inputs from the Fisheries Commission and other relevant stakeholders. The plan must follow the guidance provided in the Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625) for fishery management plans, based on the best available scientific information and local ecological knowledge of fisher folks.

The Operational Co-Management Plan shall be a living document, subject to annual performance review and amended at least every four years. The Plan can include pilot schemes, be amended as needed to change or add new management measures and include promotion of alternative and supplemental livelihood as a strategy where overfishing is occurring. The Committees will submit their Management Plans to the Fisheries Commission and the Ministry of Fisheries for approval. Once the co-management plan is approved, the Co-Management Committee has full authority to implement management measures, such as closed seasons and closed areas, within the legal guidance of the Plan. The approval of the Plan also signifies the mandate of the Co-Management Committee to commence implementation of the Plan.

The Regional Directors of Fisheries Commission will ensure that the plans from small scale fisheries Co-Management Committees are consistent with all applicable laws and policies. The Regional Directors should work closely with the smaller co-management units and local Co-Management Committees to ensure the implementation of management measures that seek to achieve the objectives and goals of the Plan. It is expected that this will allow for quicker decision making and better adaptive management measures aimed at improving the status of fish stocks. All changes in management measures made by the small-scale Co-Management Committees should be submitted to the Regional Director for approval. This approval should be completed within sixty days after receipt of the changes to facilitate implementation. The Co-Management Committee will coordinate dissemination of the approved plan, and any revisions, to all stakeholders involved in and concerned with the fishery with the support of the Fisheries Commission. Other roles and responsibilities can be authorized or delegated as deemed appropriate by the Fisheries Commission or Regional Director of the Fisheries Commission.

3.12.2 MoFAD and the Fisheries Commission

MoFAD and the Fisheries Commission may consider budgetary allocation for the purposes of supporting the implementation of this Fisheries Co-Management Policy. Voluntary contributions from other stakeholders could be accepted towards the functions of any Co-Management Committee established.

If the Co-Management Committee is established at the community level, local government authorities will be encouraged to provide budgetary and financial support to the Committee for the implementation of the management plans. Co-Management Committees shall work closely with the respective local authorities to enforce rules and be allowed to exclude or revoke fishing rights of repeat violators of fisheries rules and regulations.

Community-based committees shall work with the respective local authorities to establish bye laws that would enable the committees impose fines on violators of fisheries rules and regulations or for any fisheries related offence and use part of these fines to fund operations of the committees. Officers of the Fisheries Commission or other facilitating bodies should facilitate the process of group formation, capacity development, preparation and periodic review of management plans.

3.12.3 Local Government Units

For the purposes of this policy, local government units are defined as Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) and Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Local government units may support co-management in the following ways:

- (a) Coordinate fisheries co-management activities and incorporate needs of fisher folk into Medium-Term Development Plans such as development of landing sites, fish markets, sanitary facilities and other fisheries related local infrastructure and services;
- (b) Where fisheries are a main driver of economic activity in a district, the district governance arrangements should support inclusion of fisher folk in the planning processes and decision making;
- (c) Incorporate into district spatial plans the needs of fisher folk to have guaranteed access to the shorelines to engage in their livelihood activities and support the delineation of management areas;
- (d) Support enforcement of the fisheries regulations and rules in co-management plans in collaboration with authorized officers of the Fisheries Commission;
- (e) Provide funding to support the Co-Management Committees or implementation of the management plans from revenues generated from fish markets;
- (f) Assist the Fisheries Commission in the establishment of communication channels for awareness creation and education of fisher folk on efficient fisheries management;
- (g) Provide space for meetings or offices and other logistics for co-management committees; and
- (h) Encourage the education of the children of fisher folk and advocate against child labour and human trafficking practices in fishing communities.

3.12.4 Academia and Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations

Universities, civil society and non-governmental organizations can play important roles in fisheries co-management. In areas where they are active or have expertise, they could serve on Co-Management Committees or act in an advisory capacity to the Co-Management committees. It is the Policy of MoFAD to encourage their involvement in co-management processes and participation in planning, advisory and Co-Management Committees. Their roles can vary, such as in a scientific advisory capacity or in facilitating processes for group formation, capacity development, and plan preparation in collaboration with the Fisheries Commission.

3.12.5 Traditional institutions and women

The roles of traditional authorities in fishing communities varies from place to place and do not usually appear to promote good fishing practices. However, overall, they represent a positive force for good management even though their influence in some circumstances has been compromised over time. The earliest forms of fisheries management have depended on traditional community norms and taboos. These include the longstanding traditional institutions of the chief fisherman, headman and their councils which play key roles in fishing communities. Their primary roles historically, have been to enhance the social welfare of fishermen and their families, manage conflict among fishermen, and liaise between fishing communities, traditional authorities and government.

Chief Fishermen have over the years been a fulcrum for resource management due to their widespread respect and social influence in fishing communities. In almost every fishing community, the Chief Fishermen uphold one non-fishing day each week, which serve as a fisheries conservation measure in terms of limiting fishing effort. This Policy will encourage the involvement of traditional institutions such as the Chief Fishermen (in maritime areas), and river priests or the fisher folk headman (in inland fishing communities), in the co-management committees.

To ensure their effective role in coordination between government, fishers, their community as well as effective supervision by the Traditional Area or community chieftaincy, MoFAD will liaise with the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs to recognize the position of the Chief Fisherman, whether by inheritance or appointment by fishers, under the Chieftaincy arrangement in Ghana.

Another form of traditional institution in fisheries amongst women in Ghana is the fish market queen (for example *konkohemaa* in Akan areas) and her elders.

These women play a role in managing the marketing and pricing of fish. Like the Chief Fishermen, they play a traditional and informal role in the fisheries sector. This traditional institution is not present in all areas of the country or implemented uniformly across landing sites where they do exist. While they tend not to be adequately represented in fisheries management, in most communities they are respected individuals and are influential in providing moral authority concerning fishing practices. Additionally, women play a number of other influential roles in the fishing sector. Some women own fishing vessels and often finance fishing trips. The post-harvest sector is dominated by women who make up a large majority of the fish processors and fish marketers. Their businesses and families are adversely affected if the fishery sector is not well managed, and they have the option not to purchase illegally caught fish. Hence, the policy acknowledges the role of women in fisheries and provides for their active representation and strengthening on Co-Management Committees.



A call on the Densu Wulomo of Bortianor by Development Action Association

3.12.6 Industrial and semi-industrial fishing sub-sectors in co-management

The associations under the industrial and semi-industrial sub-sectors are the Ghana Tuna Association (GTA), Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association (GITA) and Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association (GIFA). Previously, there were no co-management practices specifically targeting the industrial or semi-industrial fishing fleets or the main stocks that they fish. These fisheries associations have contributed to sustainable management of the fisheries resources by assisting in the development and implementation of fisheries related policies and management plans. They would, therefore, be represented on Co-Management Committees representing demersal fisheries and the large and small pelagic fisheries in particular.

3.13 Landing Beach Committees

Landing Beach Committees (LBCs), consisting of representatives of fisheries stakeholders at landing sites have also been established coast-wide and inland. The inland sector has special “fishery districts” formed by the National Inland Canoe Fishermen Council. There are currently 32 such districts that can play a role in co-management systems such as financing community-based enforcement activities and planning meetings of Co-Management Committees. The mandate of LBCs, among others, is to manage the distribution of the subsidized premix fuel and use proceeds from sale of the fuel for community development. LBCs have no clear mandate for fisheries resource management even though the institution provides an opportunity to be harnessed for the co-management system.

This Policy does not intend to convert Landing Beach Committees into Co-Management Committees. The current functions of the LBCs are to be maintained as they are, and new co-management structures for resources management established as needed. This separation of committees and functions draws on past lessons where the community-based management committees failed in part as their mandates often extended beyond a primary focus on resource management.

4.1. Conclusion

It is expected that the implementation of this Co-Management Policy developed with inputs from key stakeholders of the sector will enhance the participation of fisheries resource users in the decision-making processes for the sustainable management of the sector.

To achieve this, the Policy provides a roadmap for a transition from the top-down consultative management framework into a pluralistic approach that will provide for some delegation of authority to resource users and other stakeholders in the management of the fisheries resources.

The Ministry is positive that the collective actions that led to the development of this Policy, will also come to bear to help effectively implement the Policy.

- (a) **Adaptive management:** is a structured, iterative process of decision making in the face of uncertainty, with an aim to reducing uncertainty over time via system monitoring. In this way, decision making simultaneously meets one or more resource management objectives and, either passively or actively, accrues information needed to improve future management. Because adaptive management is based on a learning process, it improves long-run management outcomes. The challenge in using the adaptive management approach lies in finding the correct balance between gaining knowledge to improve management in the future and achieving the best short-term outcome based on current knowledge. It usually requires stating explicit hypothesis about impacts of management options on the resource and then monitoring to see if action had the intended result. Adaptive management presumes that action is needed as a basis of learning.
- (b) **Bivalves:** Species of clams, oysters, mussels and other members of the phylum Mollusca characterized by a shell that is divided from front to back into left and right valves. The valves are connected to one another at a hinge.
- (c) **Brackish water fisheries:** Fisheries that occur in water bodies that are partially saline and at times could be almost purely freshwater or saltwater but varies over time and space. Generally, these refer to estuaries and coastal lagoons.
- (d) **Co-management:** Fisheries Co-management refers to the management of the exploitation of fishery resources, where authority and decision making are shared among government and other stakeholders, especially fisheries resource users and others who depend on the resource for their livelihoods.
- (e) **Community:** Community refers to a small geographic area that may consist of one or more landing sites or settlement areas that has distinct boundaries and socio-economic characteristics. Community is sometimes used to define a group of people with common interests but not necessarily all within a small and well-defined geographic area, such as a community of fisheries stakeholders.
- (f) **Community-based management:** Refers to locally based management of a fishery or small-scale ecosystem within a small geographically defined area and may include one or several fishing settlements or areas of landings sites.

- (g) Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM):** An environmental management approach that recognises the full array of interactions within an ecosystem, including humans, rather than considering single issues, species, or ecosystem services in isolation. Ecosystem-based management for marine environments is a departure from the traditional strategies in which single species and single sectors are managed individually; rather it is an integrated approach which considers all key activities, particularly anthropogenic, that affect marine environments. The objective is to ensure sustainable ecosystems, thus protecting the resources and services they provide.
- (h) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):** A Marine zone adjacent to the general shoreline and extending out 200 NM to sea, and as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Coastal States have certain rights and responsibilities in this zone including the right to fish and exclude others from fishing in these areas, and the responsibility to manage those resources sustainably.
- (i) Fisheries Commission:** The Fisheries Commission consists of government and non-government members with a Chairperson who is appointed by the President and an Executive Director who heads the secretariat of the Commission and manages a public service support staff of fisheries specialists.
- (j) Inland fisheries:** Defined as fishing in freshwater bodies that include lakes, reservoirs, and rivers.
- (k) Konkohemaa:** This is a traditional position held by a female member of the community involved in the buying and selling of fish in some coastal communities. They set the buying price of fish that comes off the canoes.
- (l) Marine fisheries:** Fisheries that occur in the marine waters of Ghana, usually in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which extends from the coastline out to 200 NM. Marine fisheries can take place in marine waters beyond national jurisdiction as well.

- (m) Precautionary principle:** Also known as the precautionary approach, is a risk management term which states that if an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to the public, or to the environment and in the absence of a scientific consensus that the action or policy is not harmful, the burden of proof that it is not harmful falls on those taking an action that may or may not be a risk. In fisheries, the precautionary approach or principle should be applied when ecosystem resilience and human impact (including reversibility) are difficult to forecast and hard to distinguish from natural changes.
- (n) Shellfish:** Shellfish is a term used for a number of types of marine and aquatic organisms that have an exoskeleton or shell covering their exterior bodies. These include prawns (freshwater and marine), crabs, clams, and oysters, to name a few. Shellfish are not really fish that have back bones but are aquatic animals with a shell and that is harvested for food consumption. In some cases, they refer exclusively to bivalves such as clams and oysters.
- (o) Stratum:** Demarcations or divisions of space. In the Volta Lake, the demarcation is based on ecological parameters within the lake.
- (p) Territorial use rights:** Refers to the specific individual or collective right and granted with legal backing or through licensing to harvest a certain type or amount of fish. It does not confer ownership of the fisheries resource, just an exclusive harvesting privilege.

To guide the implementation process, the key concepts underpinning this policy should be construed as follows:

(a) Co-management is an approach to managing the harvest of defined fishery ecosystems and associated fish stocks in defined management areas through management groups where authority for how fish can be harvested, who can fish, and how much fish is harvested annually is vested in the management groups, and whereby decision making is shared among government authorities (primarily Fisheries Commission staff), and representatives of fisheries stakeholders for the fishery concerned. This would include both women and men, representatives of traditional fisheries institutions, harvesters from all fleets exploiting said resource, processors, marketers and other concerned civil society organizations with an interest in the fishery.

The decision-making approach considers community consensus building instead of voting so that there is a buy in by stakeholders to promote voluntary compliance on management measures adopted to sustainably manage the said fishery. The government, under its national responsibilities, ensures management measures conform to national laws and are consistent with national policy objectives and goals for management of Ghana's fisheries resources. The stakeholders and committees are then mandated to negotiate rules and equitable sharing of benefits, functions and responsibilities among themselves.

(b) Community: Fishing community is defined as a group of fishery resource users and their households that exploit a common resource and are found in one or several geographic settlement areas found in proximity to the resources exploited. Fishing communities can be small consisting of only a small number of canoes or households, or large consisting of many individuals and households utilizing a large number of vessels.

(c) Community-based management is a special form of co-management where the defined fishery ecosystem and associated fish stocks, is the management unit, and the collective of individuals utilizing those resources is small scale, consisting of one or several landing sites or communities, but not encompassing an entire district or region.

Community-based management systems are intended to be applied primarily to lake, riverine, estuary and lagoon ecosystems or segments thereof, and in some cases to specific small scale or sedentary marine species or stocks.

The marine areas can have fishery watch volunteer committees formed at the fishing village or landing site level, mainly for purposes of fisheries surveillance and enforcement of national laws or rules established by the fisheries resources Co-Management Committees formed at larger scales. These fisheries volunteer watch committees are a form of community-based management.

(d) Decentralization in fisheries refers to an approach whereby lower levels of government such as a regional or district council has authority and jurisdiction for managing a geographically defined marine or aquatic area. Typically, decentralization is used for managing fisheries within countries with large maritime jurisdictions and where lower level government units typically manage only enclosed, semi enclosed or near shore marine areas or inland water bodies. Fisheries are not a decentralised sector under Ghanaian law and a decentralisation policy for fisheries is not considered as a policy direction at this time. However, delegated authority to regional fisheries offices and their directors are provided for in this policy for those ecosystems and fisheries stocks considered appropriate for community-based management. It is considered too large a burden for numerous management committees to be constituted and numerous plans to be reviewed and approved by national level bodies where the priority needs to be on those fisheries of national level significance economically and for food security, such as the small pelagics, large pelagics including tuna and commercial demersal trawl fisheries.

(e) Use rights is often associated with co-management approaches in fisheries but not always considered as part of co-management approaches. Use rights in fisheries is defined as a right to harvest certain types of fish and/or amount of fish (e.g. total, individual or cooperative fishable quota), or use of specific types of fishing gears, that is provided to an individual, corporation or legally constituted group of fisher folk for a given area or fishery management unit (e.g. Territorial Use Rights in Fisheries (TURF)). The right refers only to the permission to harvest the fish and not ownership of the resource itself. Use rights can be provided for as part of the provisions of a legally adopted fishery management plan and any associated licensing system.

The use right can be broadly granted to a co-management group, or provided under the individual, corporate or group licensing restrictions authorized in the plan and approved by the Fisheries Commission. Use rights, through the management plans, can be for a limited duration or permanent, they can be non-transferable or transferable, or they can be saleable or non-saleable based on rules provided by the Fisheries Commission for said rights.

CO-MANAGEMENT POLICY
FOR THE FISHERIES SECTOR
NOVEMBER 2020

This publication was printed with support from
the American People, USAID Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
(Cooperative Agreement No. AID-641-A-15-00001)