**Implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication in Ghana**

**Final Project Report**

Technical Services for Community Development (TESCOD) | International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

September 2018 to August 2019

**Project Activities**

**1. Translation of the summary of the SSF Guidelines (prepared by ICSF) into Nzema, Fanti, Ga and Ewe languages**

Technical Services for Community Development (TESCOD) Ghana made a careful search for some of the leading local translators in Ghana. This effort proved useful in identifying a group of relatively young but knowledgeable translators, some of who work for academic and religious institutions, and others for the print and electronic media.

After a series of meetings within the first three weeks of November 2018, four translation teams were commissioned: Richard Kyei (Ga), David Danquah (Ewe) and Robert Aryeh and Joseph KojoMenla (Fanti and Nzema).

Copies of the draft translations were circulated in James Town and Ga Mashie in Accra, Keta in Volta Region, Elmina in Central Region and Sekondi Takoradi in Western Region between 3-10 October, 2018. However, the general feedback was that the text was quite technical, even in summarized form, with several legal terms and difficult for the average reader to comprehend. This observation led to several reviews modifying the texts to read more naturally, while accurately conveying the substance of the Guidelines. Additionally, participants of the local workshops held in Accra, Takoradi and Keta were also given copies of the translated document. Electronic copies of the Ga, Ewe, Fanti and Nzema FAO SSF Guidelines are available [here](https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Figssf.icsf.net%2Fen%2Fpage%2F1067-SSF%2520Guidelines%2520(Summary).html&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNF6aVkqRiJ8oc7Zrr93LSWgNLRKEw).

**2. Sub-national workshops for fishworkers and fishworker organisations**

1. **Accra, Greater Accra Region (27 November, 2018)**

Accra is the capital of Ghana and houses the judicial, executive and legislative arms of government. A major economic hub, with business and transportation networks across Africa, it remains the homeland of Ga and Adangme people. Fisheries play an important social, economic and cultural role in Ga-Adangme communities along the coast. However, fishworkers in Accra have not been spared the challenges in small-scale fisheries and the consequent economic reversal. Many interventions from the central government, fishworker organisations (FWO) and civil society organizations (CSO) have mostly focused on legislative aspects. Informed by the local context of small-scale fisheries in Accra, a one-day workshop was held in the Ga language on 27 November, 2018 at the Trade Union Congress (TUC). Participants were drawn from the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC), Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) and other stakeholders across the fisheries value chain in the region.

Mr. Benjamin Nyampong, a trade unionist, welcomed the participants and offered them the opportunity to introduce themselves. This was followed by an address by Mr. David Sackey, a representative of MOFAD. He highlighted the importance of small-scale fisheries and noted that whereas MOFAD’s mandate has revolved around policy and oversight, its new focus was to harness fishery development to enhance the livelihood of actors in the value chain. Next, Mr. Nii AyebliII, a chief from the Sempe royal family and a member of GNCF, underscored the stabilising role of the GNCFC in the face of several challenges militating against the small-scale fisheries sector.

Mr. Peter Adjei of TESCOD Ghana and a member of ICSF, drew attention to the human rights-based approach in the SSF Guidelines and the negotiations that led to the adoption of its in 2014.The FAO animation video illustrating the SSF Guidelines was then screened to show the relevance of the document. Other videos focused on cross-cutting issues such as gender, tenure rights and value chains in Costa Rica, India, Tanzania and Indonesia. The video session was followed by an overview of the SSF Guidelines by the Ga translation team leader, Mr Richard Kyei. He guided the participants through the document by explaining its guiding principles and thematic areas.

After this session and the lunch break, the second half of the workshop was devoted to an open discussion to identify challenges and opportunities within the framework of the SSF Guidelines. Participants identified with all thematic areas in the document, but prioritised impacts of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing on small-scale fishers; the lack of community participation in policy making; and weak enforcement of fisheries laws and regulations as major concerns. In bringing the workshop to a close, the participants pledged to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines at the community level. Ms. Christiana Sackey and Ms. Esther Addo of Prampram Cooperative Fishmongers Society, who participated in one of the consultative meetings on the Zero Draft of the Guidelines, said the final document justly reflected their concerns. The GNCFC pledged to work with their members to determine how to incorporate the SSF Guidelines into their traditional fishing regulations.

1. **Takoradi, Western Region (11 December, 2018)**

Since the mid-1990s, the once vibrant small-scale fishery economies of the Central and Western Regions have been on the decline. Various interventions have proved ineffective in reversing the decline. The two regions have a high incidence of illegal transhipment of fish at sea (*saiko*) and illegal pair trawling. Other unsustainable fishing methods – such as the use of lights and chemicals (DDT and carbide) – are reported to be on the increase.

The Central Region, with a population of over 2.2 million, is viewed as the hub of Ghana’s tourism industry, but is also among its poorest regions. It is also a major source of child trafficking in the Volta Lake fisheries. On the other hand, the Western Region (population 2.3 million) is endowed with mineral and timber resources. In 2010, offshore oil production began in the region and fishers were denied access to their fishing grounds, citing danger to the oil installations.

The Fanti/Nzema language workshop was organised on 11 December, 2018 at SSNIT House, Takoradi. It brought together stakeholders from GNCFC, Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA), the regional Fisheries Commission and representatives from major fishing communities, including Axim, Shama, Elmina, Moree and Sekondi.

The Takoradi workshop began with a welcome address by Mr. Benjamin Nyampong. Mr. Ransford Nartey represented the Fisheries Commission and Mr. Mike Abaka-Edu represented the GNCFC. Mr. Abaka-Edu recounted that through direct action, the GNCFC advocated for the enactment of the Fisheries Act 625 in 2002, but political interference was hindering the effective enforcement of the law. While acknowledging the challenges facing the small-scale fisheries sector, Mr. Peter Adjei, TESCOD and ICSF, introduced the rationale and objectives of the SSF Guidelines, stressing that the workshop was structured to engage fishworkers with the document and to deliberate on its relevance in addressing challenges and expectations in the small-scale fisheries sector.

Mr. Japheth Kojo Menlah led the participants through the SSF Guidelines by highlighting and explaining its guiding principles and thematic areas. Following the afternoon’s open discussion, participants prioritised areas of concern and offered recommendations for addressing the identified challenges. Most of these centred on IUU fishing, security of tenure of coastal and inland fishing communities to land and aquatic resources and worsening livelihoods in small-scale fisheries. The consensus was the need for the Ghanaian government to develop the proposed National Fisheries Co-Management Policy, so fishworkers can participate in management. Participants also discussed the urgent need for government, fishers and oil-and-gas companies to use dialogue to address conflicts of tenure rights and access to resources. Mr. Nicholas Smith (Programmes Director, CEWEFIA), Mr. Nana Odwiri (chief fisherman at Shama) and Ms. Ama Kappu (a fish processor and dealer at Elmina) made passionate appeals to the participants to familiarise themselves with the SSF Guidelines to influence policy in favour of small-scale fisheries.

1. **Keta, Volta Region (16 December, 2018)**

Keta, the administrative capital of Keta Municipal in the Volta Region, is located 160 km east of Accra. The Municipal is endowed with considerable fisheries resources – 60 km of the Atlantic coastline and the 300-sq-km Keta Lagoon, the largest lagoon in Ghana. In addition, there are numerous rivers and creeks that support the small-scale fisheries economy. In recent years, the once thriving fisheries sector noted for its anchovies, mullets, shrimps, sea breams and oysters has been on the decline.

According to the SSF actors, the decline in landings is attributable to overfishing by migrant fishers who use destructive fishing gears. The downturn in the fishery fortunes has adversely affected livelihoods and ancillary businesses. Another looming threat is oil-and-gas exploration in the Keta Basin. In 2016, a licence for exploratory drilling was granted in the Keta Basin. A coalition of fishworkers and farmers estimate that some 600,000 inhabitants are likely to lose their livelihoods from commercial oil production. The Keta Workshop was held in Ewe on 16 December, 2018. It brought together municipal and fisheries officials, GNCFC and fishworkers from Keta Municipal and neighbouring Ketu South Municipal.

The workshop commenced with introductory remarks by Mr. David Danquah, the SSF Guidelines Ewe translation team leader. Mr. Promise Gavor, a representative of the Fisheries Commission in the Keta Municipal Assembly gave an overview of small-scale fisheries in the municipality and the support his office provides to fishworkers. This support capacity building through training programmes and assistance to access credit, particularly from the Agricultural Development Bank and Anlo Rural Bank. This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Togbui Sri Abussi of GNCFC, who outlined the local GNCFC’s key role as ensuring cohesion within the small-scale fisheries sector and promoting sustainable fisheries. He observed that the current challenges in the sector were driven by a combination of weak enforcement of regulations and the exclusion of fishers and community leaders from fisheries management. Introducing the workshop’s objectives, Mr. Peter Adjei explained that the Keta workshop sought not only to introduce the SSF Guidelines to fishworkers, but also to identify pertinent challenges and issues that can be addressed using the Guidelines at the community and national level.

Facilitated by Mr. Danquah and Mr. Promise Gavor, the participants identified poor social infrastructure and beachfront development; lack of enforcement of fishing regulations; frequent tidal waves; and exclusion of fishworkers in decision-making as key constraints. The participants declared their readiness to help in implementing the SSF Guidelines together with other responsible stakeholders. Mr. Torgbui Seth Abotsi remarked that Guidelines provided a systematic approach to addressing challenges in small-scale fisheries. Mr. Torgbui Gada noted that the document offered the opportunity to right the social injustice in the sector and called on all actors to work towards more sustainable fisheries.

**3. National Workshop on the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines in Ghana**

To further the implementation of the FAO SSF Guidleines at the national level in Ghana, a bottom-up participatory process was adopted. This comprised translating the Guidelines into four local languages and conducting three sub-national workshops, to formulate inputs for a national workshop. Whereas the sub-national workshops focused on raising awareness amongst fishers, fishworkers and community-based fishworker organisations, the national workshop’s overarching objective was to prioritize the small-scale fisheries issues emanating from these workshops, to be addressed within a national SSF Guidleines framework.

The workshop was held from 14 to 15 August, 2019 at the University of Ghana, Legon, after extensive consultation with representatives of major small-scale fisheries stakeholders in Ghana. Participants and delegates were drawn from the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA), Prampram Cooperative Fishmongers Society, National Inland Canoe Fisherman Council (NICFC), Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC), Central & Western Fishmongers Association (CEWEFIA) and University of Ghana, among others. On the first day, participants discussed the highlights of the SSF Guidelines and fine-tuned the sub-national workshop goals and outcomes.

The second day’s programme commenced with solidarity statements from fishworker organizations. This was followed by a presentation by the former chief director of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Professor F.K. ENunoo on the on the scope of the SSF Guidelines in the Ghanaian fisheries sector, from the perspective of policy and regulation. The second session dealt with a presentation report of local workshops by Mr. Peter Adjei, which formed the basis of focus group discussions on three main areas: (a) key challenges and opportunities for change in Ghanaian small-scale fisheries; (b) roles and responsibilities of primary actors – the State, FWOs, CSOs, academia – in implementation; and (c) actions for addressing identified issues within the SSF Guidelines framework.

The group discussions and debates led to the third session, which focused on a presentation of group reports and conclusions. While there were varying perspectives from the three groups, the key issues and recommendations at the end of the plenary session were deeply rooted in the local workshops, but broader in scope. The main recommendations include:

1. Work with the MOFAD and other stakeholders to adopt the SSF Guidelines into enforceable fisheries laws and regulations;
2. Develop a small-scale fisheries development long-term vision document for presentation to MOFAD and the Fisheries Commission, with clearly outlined annual plans;
3. Conduct a complete stakeholder analysis of the small-scale fisheries value chain, including a definition of small-scale fisheries in Ghana;
4. Increase advocacy efforts regarding inequalities in the small-scale fisheries sector, particularly on gender issues and focus on inland fisheries, which are marginalised; and
5. Train FWOs and other local stakeholders to sustain the mainstreaming of the SSF Guidelines and human rights-based approach at the national and subnational levels.

**4. Ghana National Platform for the SSF Guidelines**

TESCOD and its partners in Ghana mooted the idea of a National Platform for the SSF Guidelines, seeking to raise awareness about the Guidelines among different stakeholders and to promote appropriate policy responses for the sector. To this end, a seven-member National Platform was launched on 15 August, 2019 at the national workshop in Ghana. The members joined voluntarily, responding to a call by TESCOD during the sub-national workshops held in 2018. The platform has no hierarchical structure and is open to any person with interest in human rights and small-scale fisheries. By consensus, it was agreed that dialogue may be initiated by any member through social media but physical meetings will be held twice a year. The first meeting was moderated by Mr. Peter Adjei. At its next scheduled meeting in January 2020, the Platform’s members will elect a new moderator. The founding members of the National Platform are:

* Mike Abaka-Edu

*Secretary of Western Region branch of GNCFC, Sekondi, Western Region*

* Jennifer Glover

*Department of Fisheries Cooperatives, Keta Municipal Assembly, Volta Region*

* Nicholas Smith

*Programmes Officer, CEWEFIA, Elmina Central Region*

* Peter Adjei

*Acting Director, TESCOD Ghana and Member, ICSF*

* Jacob Tetteh Ageke

*President, National Inland Canoe Fishermen Council (NICFC), Greater Accra*

* David Kotane Kaku

*Fisher and member of GNCFC, Axim Western Region*

* Andrew Kojo Mensah

*Boat owner and member of GNCFC, Axim Western Region*

In its maiden physical meeting, the Platform set itself the following objectives:

* Work collaboratively with FWOs, CSOs, MOFAD, media agencies, and academia to sustain and expand awareness of the FAO SSF Guidelines at the national and sub-national levels;
* Monitor and document activities that are related to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in Ghana; and
* Promote the alignment of national fisheries legislation and policy with the SSF Guidelines through appropriate stakeholder consultations, media campaigns and engagement with government authorities.

**Conclusion**

The initial phase of implementing the SSF Guidelines in Ghana has led to many meaningful outcomes and lessons. Besides the development of local language translations of the Guidelines, over 120 participants from FWOs, CSOs, academia and the government benefited from local and national implementation workshops. In addition, the project resulted in the formation of a National Platform for the SSF Guidelines.

The year-long project was fraught with a number of organisational and logistic challenges. As many as 2.5 million Ghanaians are dependent on small-scale fisheries spread across thousands of communities, local governments and traditional jurisdictions. In order to achieve greater impact, the TESCOD team not only engaged with FWOs in the workshop locations, but also introduced the SSF Guidelines directly to chiefs and fishworkers.

This approach led to the diverse groups of workshop participants and a high interest in the Guidelines. While most activities were executed as planned, the national workshop date was rescheduled many times. Nevertheless, this was critical in getting the major FWOs in Ghana, including GNCFC, NAFPTA and NICFC, to harmonise their views and commit to work together to implement the SSF Guidelines.

Building on this foundation, TESCOD advocates for a continuation of activities to implement the SSF Guidelines, going from the awareness raising stage to addressing specific challenges such as *saiko*, child labour and trafficking and resource conflicts.