



Far Dwuma Nkodo

Securing Sustainable Fisheries

ISSUE BRIEF

Project update: July to December 2019

Introduction

The Far Dwuma Nkodo project aims to secure greater environmental sustainability and social equity in Ghana's fisheries sector, by supporting efforts to reduce illegal fishing and building the capacity of fishing communities in the sustainable management of their resource. Welcome to our newsletter for July to December 2019, which provides updates on progress under the project and our upcoming work.

Advocacy to end illegal saiko fishing

During the second half of 2019, national and regional executives of the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC), in collaboration with other civil society organisations, organised community screenings of the film "Stolen at Sea" which details, for the first time, the true cost of illegal saiko fishing to Ghana's people and its seas. The film was screened in 12 cluster communities across three coastal regions: Saltpond, Ankafu, Moree, Winneba and Abandze in the Central Region; Keta and Adina in the Volta Region, and Nkroful, Nzema East, Agona Nkwanta, Shama and Takoradi in the Western Region. Over 300 fishers were engaged in each of the

community screenings. The film and accompanying report by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) and Hen Mpoano, which uses film evidence shot at sea, first-hand monitoring at ports and data analysis to reveal the full catastrophic scale of this form of organised crime, were launched in June 2019.

At the regional level, the film was also screened at the ninth meeting of the West Africa Task Force of the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) in Monrovia, Liberia, in September 2019.

The final quarter of 2019 saw the start of intensive advocacy to end illegal saiko fishing, led by GNCFC and supported by EJF, Hen Mpoano, Care International Ghana, Oxfam Ghana, Friends of the Nation, Cerath Development Organization, CEMLAWS and the Livestock and Fisheries Chamber.

Link to the report and film:

- <https://ejfoundation.org/reports/stolen-at-sea-how-illegal-saiko-fishing-is-fuelling-the-collapse-of-ghanas-fisheries>
- <https://ejfoundation.org/films/shining-a-light>



Screening of the saiko film at Winneba led by GNCFC in November 2019

Meeting with the Parliamentary Select Committee to discuss the issue of saiko



Project staff interact with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs.

In August 2019, a consortium of civil society organisations, led by EJP and Hen Mpoano, met with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs at Parliament House in Accra to discuss the issue of illegal saiko fishing. The meeting was to present to the committee the report and film on saiko, launched in Accra in June.

The meeting included representatives from Oxfam in Ghana, Care International in Ghana, Friends of the Nation and GNCFC, as well as Professor Wisdom Akpalu, a natural resource economist with UNU-WIDER. After the screening, the Vice Chair of the Parliamentary Select Committee, Abraham Dwuma Odoom, said illegal saiko fishing should be declared a national disaster for Ghana. The committee, he said, would collaborate with civil society organisations in the fisheries sector to wage war against the illegality, which is not only a threat to the country's fisheries, but to national security. Others members of the committee expressed shock and dismay, likening saiko to illegal mining ('galamsey') on land. They would, they added, join forces with civil society to bring information on 'galamsey at sea' to the attention of the President.

Link to story in the press:

- <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/parliamentary-select-committee-on-agriculture-commits-to-fight-saiko-fishing.html>

The Far Dwuma Nkodo project participates in the second Conference on Fisheries and the Coastal Environment

In August 2019, the saiko film was screened to participants at the second Conference on Fisheries and the Coastal Environment (CFCE) held in Accra. The issue of saiko took centre stage at the conference, with industry associations and the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development making bold commitments to end the practice, given its negative impacts on thousands of artisanal fishers.

The conference was attended by 282 participants from research institutions, industry associations and the private sector, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and the Fisheries Commission, other government ministries and agencies, FCWC, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), civil society, fishermen, fishmongers and the media.

Recognising the national importance of marine and coastal ecosystems and fisheries to the people of Ghana, the conference published a communiqué with 12 recommendations for attention and necessary action. Amongst other things, the communiqué recommended that the Fisheries Commission, Fisheries Enforcement Unit and other related government agencies should immediately take advantage of the goodwill expressed by the leadership of the Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association (GITA) and GNCFC to eradicate illegal saiko fishing and find ways to reduce the excessive by-catch of juveniles by the trawl fleet.

EJP welcomed the clear statement by the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development at the conference on the need to eradicate saiko. It was the government's priority, she said, to ensure the recovery of fish stocks and sustainability of the sector, therefore the illegal practice of saiko must end.

Links to news articles:

- <https://www.modernghana.com/news/952314/the-minister-is-right-for-the-sake-of-ghanaians.html>
- <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2019/August-23rd/i-never-asked-fishermen-to-engage-in-saiko-fisheries-minister.php>
- <https://ejfoundation.org/news-media/the-minister-is-right-for-the-sake-of-ghanas-people-and-its-fisheries-saiko-must-stop>

Head of the EU Delegation to Ghana pays visit to the Far Dwuma Nkodo project

The Head of the European Union Delegation to Ghana, Ambassador Diana Acconcia, paid a two-day working visit to Cape Coast and Elmina in October 2019, meeting community leaders, fishers and fish processors to discuss the future of Ghana's fisheries and coastal communities.



Ambassador Acconcia addresses the press during her visit to Elmina.

She paid a courtesy call on the Omanhene of Oguaa Traditional Area, Osabarima Kwesi Atta II, and later joined a durbar with fisherfolk in Cape Coast. The EU is currently funding two fisheries projects in Ghana: the Far Dwuma Nkodo project, implemented by EJP and Hen Mpoano, and the Far Ban Bo project, implemented by Care International, Oxfam and Friends of the Nation. These projects are aimed at addressing illegal fishing, securing the tenure rights of small-scale fishers, and promoting responsible fishing practices.

At Elmina, the Ambassador visited the saiko landing site, witnessing the impacts of this destructive fishing practice on coastal communities and meeting with government officers to understand the measures being taken to eliminate saiko.

Interacting with the press after the visit, Ambassador Acconcia made the following statement: “Urgent action is required to save Ghana’s coastal fisheries. Their collapse would have unimaginable implications for fishing communities, with potential for widespread poverty, civil unrest and threats to national security.”

“The EU is ready to support the Ghanaian government and fishing communities in the fight to end the highly damaging practice of saiko, and other forms of illegal fishing,” she said.

Links to stories published on the Ambassador’s visit:

- https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ghana/69264/enforcement-needed-end-saiko-fishing-troubles_en
- <https://ghananewsagency.org/social/robust-and-transparent-enforcement-measures-needed-to-end-saiko-eu-158139>
- <https://businessghana.com/site/news/general/198458/Robust-enforcement-measures-needed-EU>
- <http://thechronicle.com.gh/index.php/2019/10/22/ghana-needs-urgent-action-to-save-coastal-fisheries-ambassador-acconcia/>

Supporting the Fisheries Commission to form Landing Beach Enforcement Committees

In 2017, the Central Regional Directorate of the Fisheries Commission and the GNCFC deliberated on the need to establish community enforcement committees at the landing beaches to help address illegal fishing.



A Fisheries Commission officer briefs committee members at Cape Coast landing beach.



A Fisheries Commission officer briefs committee members at Brenu Akyinim.

Beginning in 2019, the programme was piloted in Elmina, Mumford and Nyanyaano and has seen significant success.

During the last quarter of 2019, the Far Dwuma Nkodo project supported the Fisheries Commission to train a 15-member Landing Beach Enforcement Committees at 48 landing beaches in the Central Region. Each Committee is made up of:

- An enforcement committee, the 10 members of which are democratically elected by the fisher folks.
- A grievance committee with five members, namely an officer of the Fisheries Commission, an officer of the Ghana Police Service, the Chief fisherman, a representative of the fish processors, and a member of the traditional council.

The Chief fisherman and Fisheries Commission officer each serve as chair of the committee. Membership is generally voluntary, although in Elmina, fishers have decided to give a small portion of their catch to support the ten enforcement members of the committee to ensure sustainability.

During the meetings, the enforcement committee members were trained on how to use the mobile application (“DASE”) developed under the Far Dwuma Nkodo project for effective community surveillance and patrols. The app allows fishers with compatible smartphones to record geotagged images and film of illegal activities at sea, which are reported to a central database for use as evidence in prosecutions. The fishers were also trained on: the boundary of the Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) reserved for artisanal fishers using maps produced by the project; fisher rights and responsibilities, including marking of fishing gears and adoption of responsible fishing practices; the Fisheries Commission’s protocol for reporting infractions at sea in order to help fishers to claim compensation, where appropriate; and how to report on illegal fishing to assist the work of the enforcement authorities.

Start of pilot project to map the fishing grounds of small-scale fishers



A tracking device installed on a canoe at Cape Coast.

The Far Dwuma Nkodo project is piloting a canoe monitoring system aimed at mapping the fishing grounds of small-scale fishers. During the last quarter of 2019, tracking devices from Pelagic Data Systems, a US-based technology company providing vessel tracking solutions designed specifically for small-scale fisheries, were installed on 21 canoes and 4 inshore vessels, with a particular focus on fishers who fish at somewhat “fixed” fishing grounds, for example using set net and hook and line techniques. The aim is to track where these vessels are fishing over an initial period of one year, with a view to developing a heat map of fishing effort intensity for artisanal fishing.

These data will assist in the spatial management of Ghana’s fisheries, informing the management and protection of fishing zones for artisanal fishers in the context of oil exploration and fishing by the industrial fleet. They will also inform discussions around the extension of the IEZ in the context of ongoing legal reforms and provide a basis for future efforts to develop a national marine spatial plan.

Training courses were held for selected fishers, their canoe owners and Chief fishermen in Cape Coast, Elmina, Sekondi, James Town, Senya, Saltpond, Ankaful, Apam and Keta. 17 Fisheries Commission zonal officers from all four coastal regions were also trained on the pilot project and directly involved in its implementation at selected landing sites.

Production of monthly radio programmes

In 2019, we continued with our monthly radio shows on ATL FM in Cape Coast to give a voice to fishers to speak on issues that affect the sector and their livelihoods. The programmes are aired in English on the Monday morning, and in Fante on the Tuesday afternoon. During the second half of the year, the EU-funded Far Dwuma Nkodo radio shows discussed the following topics:

- July 2019: the EJF and Hen Mpoano report on illegal saiko fishing – “Stolen at sea: how illegal saiko fishing is fuelling the collapse of Ghana’s fisheries”.

- August 2019: the two-month closed season observed by industrial trawlers and their commitment to ending saiko fishing with other fisher associations.
- September 2019: the establishment of Landing Beach Enforcement Committees in the Central Region to fight illegal fishing and how they can be sustained.
- October 2019: the impacts of illegal fishing and the need to end such illegalities at sea, with emphasis on the US\$1 million fine imposed on the trawler, Lu Rong Yuan Yu 956, for landing juvenile fish, non-reporting of catches, and possession of illegal fishing gear.
- November 2019: the decision taken by GITA to suspend the illegal saiko business with a focus on how this will help sustain Ghana’s fisheries, especially small pelagic fish populations.

A number of the radio programmes in the local dialect (Fante) were aired live from the landing beaches, to increase participation of the fishers and offer them the opportunity to ask questions concerning the issues discussed.

Development of the DASE mobile app and training of Fisheries Commission officers



A team of project officers and community members from Gomoa Fetteh carry out a trial of the app at sea.

The second half of 2019 saw the piloting and widespread deployment of a new mobile app by the Far Dwuma Nkodo project. To address challenges encountered during trials of a dedicated app for IUU reporting, the project shifted focus to an off the shelf app developed by Atlan/Social Cops for data collection in a range of remote environments. The “Collect” app was adapted to the fisheries context in Ghana, with a specific survey set up to allow fishers to submit geotagged images, precise location information and film in a few simple steps.

The new mobile app, named “DASE” meaning “evidence” in the local Fante language, has shown promising results to date, with advantages including:

- Subscription via text message
- Easy installation process
- Functionality in low network settings
- Offline mode allows observations to be synced when internet is available
- Compatibility with the majority of smartphones encountered at landing sites

- Simple, user-friendly interface
- Limited storage required
- Flexibility for administrator to modify the app based on feedback and reports from users
- New app versions automatically pushed to user smartphones
- Flexibility to specify resolution for photos and videos, to achieve balance between loading times and evidence quality

Through the Landing Beach Enforcement Committees, over 700 fishers have been trained on the app in the Central Region, with additional fishers trained in Greater Accra, Volta Region and Western Region in collaboration with the Far Ban Bo project. By the end of 2019, the app had been installed on over 100 smartphones, with a number of fishers using the app at sea. In December, local fishers observed a trawler apparently fishing in the IEZ and submitted a photograph and film using the app. The Fisheries Commission has been alerted to this case for further investigation.

As part of activities in 2019, dedicated trainings were delivered to Fisheries Commission zonal officers in the Central Region on the use of the DASE mobile app. Zonal officers also participated in meetings with fishers on the use of the app in Moree, Biriwa, Ankafu, Komenda, Winneba, Mumford, Fetteh, Senya, Nyanyano, Otuam and Cape Coast. In August, a meeting was held in Accra with the Executive Director,

divisional heads, regional directors and zonal officers of the Fisheries Commission to provide them with an update on the DASE app, as well as the pilot project to track small-scale vessels (see above), and identify areas for collaboration.

Support to the Cape Coast festival and regatta with the Fisheries Commission and ATL FM

As part of the Cape Coast festival in September 2019, the Far Dwuma Nkodo project partnered with the Fisheries Commission and ATL FM to organize the Bakatue (regatta) on the Fosu Lagoon for fishers in Cape Coast. Three Asafo companies, Bentsir, Anafo and Nkum participated in the regatta. The regatta is a celebration to usher the people of Cape Coast into a bumper harvest in the fisheries sector, and as tradition demands the Paramount Chief casts his net into the lagoon for the first catch. This underscores the important role that fisheries play in the lives of the people of this traditional area. The winners of the regatta received specially designed flags from the Far Dwuma Nkodo project with messages promoting responsible fishing, as well as cash prizes from the Fisheries Commission. In attendance were the traditional leaders from the Oguaa (Cape Coast) traditional area, the Executive Director and staff of the Fisheries Commission, staff of the Far Dwuma Nkodo project, masqueraders and the general public.



Masqueraders display a project banner at the Cape Coast festival.



The Executive Director of the Fisheries Commission hands out prizes to the winners of the regatta at the Cape Coast festival.

Speaking on behalf of the Fetu Afahye planning committee, Nana Kwodwo Addae, Chief of Abura, urged fishers to embrace good fishing practices to help protect the livelihoods of fishers. He commended fishers for observing the 2019 closed season and wished them the very best in the coming fishing season. Executive Director of the Fisheries Commission, Mr Michael Arthur Dadzie Esq., thanked all fishers for the successful implementation of the 2019 closed season and called on fishers to rise up and speak against all forms of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices to help secure Ghana's fisheries.

A video link from the festival is available at:

• <https://www.facebook.com/atlfm1005/videos/928204630869735/>

Scoping assessment – alternative and supplementary non-fisheries livelihoods

A scoping assessment of sustainable non-fisheries livelihood opportunities was completed by the Far Dwuma Nkodo project in 2019. The assessment was primarily aimed at understanding the alternative or supplementary livelihood opportunities in the context of coastal fishing communities, with the objective of arriving at options that are acceptable to fishers and fishmongers in the Central Region.

A total of 24 focus group discussions and 13 key informant interviews were held, involving fishers using six different gear types (purse seine, set net, hook and line, ali net, beach seine and drift gill net), as well as boat owners and fish processors. In all, the study reached 292 fishers and fishmongers from 17 different communities in the Central Region as well as academics, non-governmental organisations, government institutions, 'konkohemaas' (Queen fishmongers) and Chief fishermen across the Central, Western and Greater Accra Regions.

The study found that farming in all its forms was most preferable to fishers as an alternative or supplementary livelihood. This includes crop farming, and poultry, pig and other livestock rearing. Of the livestock rearing options,

pig farming emerged as most preferable and economically rewarding according to fishers. Many fishers were also found to be engaged in farming on a small scale and were confident that an expansion to larger scale crop farming and more intensive livestock rearing could serve them well as an alternative livelihood. Baking was found to be most desirable to fish processors as it involves contact with ovens and fires, which they are used to.

Fishers were also willing to take out loans for livelihood ventures, provided these came from reliable sources as a result of bad experiences with banks and institutions in their communities. The fishers welcomed the idea of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) but expressed the need for better education of the underlying principles to encourage understanding, trust and buy-in.

Phase Two of this activity will focus on implementing selected recommendations from the scoping assessment, with an emphasis on crop farming as the preferred livelihood option offering the greatest potential for replication. The Far Dwuma Nkodo project will also aim to link fishers to the government's Planting for Food and Jobs programme, while looking at the feasibility of applying conservation agriculture and climate-smart agriculture techniques to restore degraded farmland along the coast.



Bawjiase market in Ghana's Central Region.

Landing site mapping - documentation of the registration process at British Komenda

The Far Dwuma Nkodo project has carried out extensive mapping of 118 landing sites along the coast of the Central Region, at Ada in the Greater Accra Region, and Tsatsukope in the Volta Region. The landing site maps were finalised in 2020 with the addition of high-quality drone imagery for selected sites. In 2020, the maps will be printed and mounted at landing beaches and/or displayed in the office of the Chief fishermen for reference. Trainings will be provided to fisher folk on how to use the maps to claim access to land in the face of encroachment from competing interests, in line with the principle of “legitimate tenure rights” enshrined in the FAO’s Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security (VGGT).

In a complementary step, the Far Dwuma Nkodo project is carrying out a pilot study on the use of existing land ownership and documentation processes to protect access to landing sites for fisher folk. British Komenda in the Central Region was selected as a case study based on location and the will of the traditional authorities and fisher folk to secure the landing site through formal land registration processes. British Komenda is also subject to potential threats arising from planned works under the Sea Defense and Erosion Project in Ghana. Although the sea defense project seeks to protect coastal communities and rebuild beaches through the use of groynes and other structures, a further aim is to attract tourist and other development, which may compete with existing uses of the beachfront. The land lease agreement for British Komenda landing site has been signed, and development of the indenture and cadastral plan is ongoing. Guidance on the process will be produced and distributed to fishing communities in 2020.

Journalists grant programme for reporting on fisheries

We continued with our quarterly story grant programme, which offers small grants to journalists to support reporting on fisheries issues. Story grants were issued to four journalists in 2019, one from Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, two from Joy News and one from ATL FM. Three stories were published in 2019, “Mending Ghana’s fishing net with transparency” (Afedzi Abdullah, GNA), “Paradox at sea; more trawlers on Ghana’s waters as stocks dwindle” (Zadok Gyesi, Daily Graphic) and “Saiko; an albatross on the neck” (Mary Ama Bawa of ATL FM). The next stories will focus on the clam fisheries in Ada, the case of the fisheries observer who went missing at sea in 2019 and illegal fishing methods used by industrial trawlers.

Links to the stories published in 2019:

- <https://newsghana.com.gh/ghanas-fishing-net-could-be-mended-through-transparency/>
- <https://www.graphic.com.gh/features/features/paradox-at-sea-more-trawlers-on-ghana-s-waters-against-dwindling-stocks.html>
- <https://atlfmnews.com/saiko-an-albatross-on-the-neck-part-two/>



A map of the fish landing site displayed at Ampenyin Abaka landing beach in the Central Region of Ghana.



Project staff interact with fishers during a trip at sea.

The **Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)** and **Hen Mpoano** are working in partnership under the **Far Dwuma Nkodo – “Securing Sustainable Fisheries”** project, with financial support from the **European Union** and the **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**. The Far Dwuma Nkodo project aims to secure greater environmental sustainability and social equity in Ghana’s fishery sector.

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