



Project 7

5 years

US\$ 4 195 890

All 6 FCWC countries

The development of IUU fishing negatively impacts fisheries resources, the environment, the development of fisheries and undermining the national and regional efforts in sustainable and responsible management of marine resources

7 Support the development of a regional centre for processing and disseminating satellite data to fight IUU fishing

Background

The six FCWC Member States (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Togo) total up **2500 km** of coastline and produce annually over 1.293.000 tonnes of fisheries products. It is therefore clear that fishing is a vital source for more than **200 million** people for food, jobs and income. In these countries, fishing is rooted in the traditions and actually represents a serious alternative to reduce the deficiency of nutrition, poverty and unemployment. However, this space is highly threatened by the negative effects of illegal, unregulated and undeclared fishing (IUU fishing).

IUU fishing is a real scourge that obstructs the action of the coastal countries in the sustainable management and fight against poverty, the deficiency of nutrition and unemployment. IUU fishing overuses the resources of the State, deteriorate marine habitat and violates their sovereignty. In recent years, following a destabilized regional socio-political environment (war in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire), the maritime area of the West African recorded a lot of illegal fishing activities.

PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

IUU fishing occurs as a form of tacit objection to the international waters system provided for by the United Nations Convention on the law of the sea. It is a real scourge that obstructs the coastal countries in the sustainable management of fisheries resources.

IUU fishing is becoming more intense in FCWC space and appears permanent and unhindered through: unlicensed fishing vessels, fishing in unauthorized areas, fishing in prohibited areas, fishing of protected species, sizes and weight, the use of prohibited gear and meshes, the lining of the nets, the illicit transfer, undeclared fishing, the discharges into the sea, dumping at sea, etc.

War situations in FCWC space (Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire) and even in Sierra Leone have brought about the proliferation of the phenomenon of IUU fishing. The fragile and vulnerable States lost control over their maritime space. The means of monitoring are dissipating. In addition, the laws and regulations to deal with issues relating to IUU fishing are inadequate, inappropriate and not binding. And defrauders can easily escape penalties.

The intensity of poverty and unemployment, with its corollary of low economic opportunities for traditional fishermen, favours this practice by the national fishing units and makes its most dramatic impact on the future of natural resources and the conditions of life of communities. At the international level, control and reduction of fishing capacity of other fisheries of the world are at the origin of the transfer of ships in areas of low capacity of control and surveillance as the Gulf of Guinea. And the absence of dissuasive and relevant jurisdictions supported this movement.

IUU fishing costs huge losses in volume and value. For example, losses due to the practice of IUU in Liberia are estimated at more than 10 million dollars each year (**Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)**). The reports of the MRAG in 2003 relating to the situation and consequences of IUU fishing are eloquent and show without ambiguity the intensity of this illegal fishing.

Currently, none of the FCWC member countries is able to say the absence of vessels flying its flag and engaged in this fishery or properly monitor and punish the stakeholders involved. This should not be the case for some countries that have register of ships like Nigeria but it is clear that ships flying Niger and Ghana flags are regularly found in Benin, Togo waters without being the subject of legal prosecution. States exercise little control over their nationals

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of the project is to reduce IUU fishing activities in the FCWC maritime space through the creation of regional and national centers for the processing of satellite data to monitor fishing vessels in operation. Data are exchanged between centers. States will be encouraged to apply VMS to industrial fishing vessels operating in their waters.

A cooperation agreement between the States will set the rules and modalities of exchanges of information and rules to prosecute the offending ships.

Product 1:
An agreement for information exchange is applied between States

- 1.1 Develop an agreement for Exchange of data and information
- 1.2 Adopt the agreement
- 1.3 Negotiate and sign the agreement

Product 3:
National Centres are set up

- 3.1 Equip the national Centres to the regional Centre
- 3.2 Connect the 6 national Centres to the regional Centre
- 3.3 Recruit train and retrain technicians (21) for 5 years

Product 4:
States are encouraged to adopt VMS

- 4.1 Conduct a study of évaluation of impacts of IUU fishing in the FCWC maritime space
- 4.2 Validate the findings of the study
- 4.3 Support States to carry out a feasibility study in the 6 countries

**PRODUCTS
AND
ACTIVITIES**

Product 2:
A regional Centre is created

- 2.1 Equip the regional Centre
- 2.2 Connect the regional Centre

Product 5:
States are encouraged to equip themselves for the control and surveillance of fisheries

- 5.1 Support States to carry out feasibility study for the acquisition of surveillance equipment in the 6 countries
- 5.2 Organize a régional workshop
- 5.3 Organize a régional workshop on the resource mobilization strategy to finance the equipment

Product 6: Lessons learnt from the implementation of the project are

- 6.1 Organize the project supervision
- 6.2 Organize the project evaluation