



**FCWC**  
Fishery Committee For The  
West Central Gulf Of Guinea



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**Terms of Reference for the  
West Africa Task Force to Stop Illegal Fishing**

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**The Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC)** was established by Convention in 2007 between the States of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo. These Contracting Parties are committed to cooperate, with a view to ensuring that through appropriate management, the conservation and optimal utilisation of the fishery resources within the marine waters under their national jurisdiction will be improved. The Committee has the responsibility to, inter alia: strengthen sub-regional cooperation in fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and enforcement, including the progressive development of common procedures; enhance cooperation in respect of relations with distant water fishing countries; and to promote the development of standards for the collection, exchange and reporting of fisheries data.

**In pursuit of these commitments, the Contracting Parties of the FCWC have established the West Africa Task Force to Stop Illegal Fishing**

**The West Africa Task Force's goal is to:**

- Stop illegal fishing in West Africa through communication, collaboration and cooperation to enable action to be taken against illegal fishery sector operators.

**The West Africa Task Force's objective is to:**

- Contribute towards the achievement of the 2014 Pan-African Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture, which was endorsed at the African Union Summit of African Heads of States and Governments, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in June 2014, as a blue print for African fisheries and Aquaculture development. The Task Force will contribute in particular to the implementation of two of the Frameworks' seven policy arenas: policy arena one – conservation and sustainable resources use; and policy area two – regional and sub-regional cooperation, through delivery of regional cooperation and information sharing on MCS and stopping illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- Assist in operationalising aspects of the 2009 FCWC Regional Plan of Action on IUU fishing (RPOA-IUU) including: the development of the national and regional MCS systems; cooperation between the FCWC and other states and regional organisations; implementation of port state controls; and strengthening of the FCWC working group on MCS.
- Facilitate the implementation of pertinent requirements of the 2014 FCWC Protocol on the Pooling and Sharing of Information and Data including, the establishment of a joint database and information system including information and data on MCS, and the creation of a sub-regional register of vessels engaged in fishing in the FCWC area, including carrier and support service vessels.
- Implement the 2010 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Banjul Declaration on IUU Fishing which expresses the determination to prevent, halt and eliminate IUU fishing in the region.
- Implement the recommendation of 2014 meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) to form a network of African regional Task Forces to stop illegal fishing, based on the concept pioneered by East African countries in 2012 known as the FISH-i Africa Task Force under the umbrella of Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF), by both cooperating with the East African Task Force and by forming the West Africa FISH-i Task Force.

### **The West Africa Task Force's membership is:**

- Initially the six Contracting Parties of the FCWC as the founder members of the Task Force but open to other West Africa countries that are interested, assuming:
  - They are able to participate
  - They agree to abide by the Decisions of the Task Force
  - That adequate financial resources are secured
  - That no objection is raised by existing Task Force members

### **The West Africa Task Force's financial and technical support is:**

- Initially based on Norad, the Norwegian development organisation's long history of partnering with African countries that wish to implement measures to ensure that their natural resources are soundly managed, and in particular fisheries resources, and their significant national expertise in fisheries MCS operations and information and intelligence sharing. This has led to their commitment to support the establishment of a West Africa Task Force to stop illegal fishing through a three year grant (2015-2017) allocated through the Norwegian organisation Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT) in cooperation with Nordenfjeldske Development Services (NFDS) and in partnership with SIF to support fisheries intelligence and MCS in West Africa. This grant includes provision for support to:
  - The Task Force for the operational requirements of Task Force meetings, trainings and attendance by Task Force members at selected international meetings.
  - A Coordinating Team that is formed by representatives of the FCWC Secretariat, TMT, NFDS and SIF. Their role is to organise and facilitate and meetings and workshops of the Task Force, other activities of the Task Force and to guide implementation of the Norwegian funded assistance.
  - A Technical Team of selected experts who will provide technical and legal support to the Task Force. The Team will draw from international and regional experts. They will prepare tools for national fisheries authorities, provide advice, capacity building and other technical and legal support required by the Task Force members.
- Further longer term support will be secured by the Task Force in partnership with the Coordination Team, through the engagement of international partners and stakeholders. Such support will be developed to continue and build Task Force operations, support membership of further West Africa States to join the Task Force, and provide ongoing technical support. Cooperation and harmonisation of the Task Force with other relevant regional initiatives will be developed and ensured, contributing to the long term sustainability of regional MCS cooperation in West Africa.

### **The West Africa Task Force's functions are to:**

- Improve compliance within the foreign and national industrial fishery sector, including the catching, transporting, processing and marketing sectors.
- Exchange information and intelligence with and between Task Force members and the Technical Team through a secure and effective communications platform. The information to be routinely shared is to include, but not be limited to, lists of vessels registered to fish or support fishing activities in the waters of member countries, lists of vessels authorised to fish or transport fish within the waters of member countries, information on inspections of fishing related vessels and information on non-compliant activities occurring within the waters of member countries.
- Maintain an accessible regional vessel register of vessels authorised to operate in the fisheries sector of West Africa, including details of their registration, fishing authorisations, photographic material, and any other relevant details about the vessel and those owning and operating it.

- Utilise information and intelligence supplied by other Task Force members or the Technical Team, appropriate tools, technical and legal advice and operational support to take actions against, and further investigations into illegal activity within the fishery sectors.
- Build capacity in national fisheries authorities to collect and interpret fisheries intelligence in support of enforcement operations and legal processes with assistance from the Technical Team through regional and national training and workshops on gathering, analysing and utilising fisheries intelligence, MCS and legal actions. To develop regional and national training plans in support of this.
- Build national inter-agency Working Groups to strengthen the national and regional capacity to gather information and intelligence and to investigate and prosecute illegal operators. Participation in these Working Groups includes other agencies involved in fisheries enforcement, and terms of references for these groups will be developed.
- Promote the Task Force and its member States through joint media coverage on the achievements and challenges of the Task Force and its contribution to illuminating illegal fishing in Africa.
- Participate in regional, African and international meetings and negotiations in relation to IUU fishing to ensure that the experiences, lessons learnt and needs of the region are heard and to facilitate networking and capacity building for Task Force members.
- Strengthen regional, African and international collaboration on MCS through communication, cooperation and collaboration with African and international partners and agencies engaged in stopping illegal fishing and the implementation of related international agreements and guidelines.
- Build relationships and exchange with other FISH-i Africa Task Forces to build the foundation of a continent wide network of fisheries control cooperation and information sharing.
- Engage funders and other international stakeholders to create a base for wider support and extension of the Task Force and the national groups.
- Establish a monitoring mechanism to gauge progress in implementing the relevant frameworks mentioned in the above objectives.

**The West Africa Task Force's procedures for operation are:**

- Developed and agreed by the Task Force in the form of Decisions made at Task Force meetings and recorded in the Record of the Task Force meeting.
- These include a minimum, resources permitting, of:
  - Two Task Force meetings to be held annually
  - Two representatives from each member state to attend Task Force meetings
  - A focal person to be appointed by each member State, at the level of Head of MCS or equivalent