



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



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**DRAFT**

**Recommendations for the establishment and  
operations of National Working Groups  
to support the  
West Africa Task Force to Stop Illegal Fishing**

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The Contracting Parties of the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), as established by Convention in 2007 between the States of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo, have committed to strengthen sub-regional cooperation in fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and enforcement.

Towards this end, the Contracting Parties agreed to establish the **West Africa Task Force (WATF) to Stop Illegal Fishing**, with a goal to stop illegal fishing in West Africa through communication, collaboration and cooperation to enable action to be taken against illegal operators within the fishery sector. At the core of activities are the generation and sharing of fisheries intelligence, and cooperation and support of MCS operations both between and within States.

To assist with, and to ensure the success of, the West Africa Task Force's objectives at the regional level, it has been proposed that each participating State establish inter-agency **National Working Groups (NWGs)**. NWGs will form the nucleus of national level fisheries intelligence gathering and analysis to inform MCS operational planning and operations. They will receive technical support from the Technical Team of the WATF.

The purpose of the NWGs is to strengthen the inter-agency cooperation, the operational planning and execution, and the regional information sharing and collaboration required to ensure successful national and regional MCS planning and operations among West African States.

While the identification of NWG participating agencies, and the structures and protocols of operations will vary from country to country and will be the responsibility of the participating States to establish, the following recommendations have been developed to assist in the establishment and activities of the NWGs.

**Establishment:**

- NWGs will not supersede or replace structures and/or agreements for inter-agency MCS cooperation that have already been established by States at the national level; rather the purpose of the NWG is to support and strengthen inter-agency MCS cooperation at the planning and 'front-line' operational level
- NWGs are led / chaired by the department responsible for MCS of the national fisheries agency, with representatives from the different aspects of work responsibilities and headed by the MCS Director or equivalent. Other members shall be from agencies that are involved in utilising fisheries intelligence and support MCS operations. This may include Navy, Coastguards, Port Authorities, Maritime Police, and Maritime Agency etc.
- Once these agencies have been identified, each agency should appoint a focal point to participate in NWG meetings and activities.
- A model template for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to assist countries is attached as Annex A.

**Operations:**

- NWG members shall be given access to and engage in communication on the established WATF regional communications and information platform. Relevant fisheries intelligence and MCS operational information shall be both provided and received by all parties through the platform.

- NWGs shall regularly meet, either as dedicated meetings or as part of broader inter-agency cooperation processes. Meetings shall focus on information sharing, MCS operational planning, and improving inter-agency cooperation at the national and regional level.
- NWG members shall be available to participate in national meetings and workshops, and regional initiatives that take place under the WATF.
- NWG members shall be responsible to relay and provide training to their colleagues, based on the training and skills developed as part of WATF activities and workshops.
- NWG members shall liaise with, and strengthen cooperation with other agencies that are relevant to MCS but may not have a regular 'front-line' role.

**Technical Support:**

- Will be provided both by staff of the agencies involved and the WATF Technical Team.

**Financial Support:**

- Regular NWG operations and meetings shall be the responsibility of the WATF participating States.
- Technical support, as well as national and regional training workshops shall initially be supported (2016-2017) by the Norwegian development agency (Norad) , and implemented by the WATF Technical Team.