

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The search for coherence in fisheries policies is a priority for West African countries, given the issues around managing depleting fish resources that often result in huge tensions between stakeholders at national and regional levels, either to access the resources or the markets. Fisheries management is an issue of prime importance in this region of almost 300 million people where fisheries can represent up to 15-17% of national GDP and up to 25-30% of export revenues, employs around 7 million, and provides up to 50% of total animal protein intake of the region's population while sustaining local livelihoods for coastal communities.

In view of the major challenges for the future of West African fisheries, Enda Diapol/REPAO (Fishery Policies Network in West Africa), the OECD Fisheries Policy Division and the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC/OECD) engaged in a partnership to conduct a joint analysis on policy coherence in fishery development policies in the seven CSRP (Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission) member countries in West Africa. The structure of the analysis was therefore based on an analytic framework developed for the OECD Committee on Fisheries (see Neiland, A. (2006) and OECD, 2006) on the issue of policy coherence in fisheries. In addition, we relied heavily on data from six case studies developed by ENDA Diapol/REPAO and WWF (Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal) entitled "Trade liberalization and sustainable management of fishery resources" as well as on data from Sierra Leone from work done by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) on sustainable fisheries management in Sierra Leone.

The objective of this report entitled "Fishing for Coherence in West Africa: A joint analysis on policy coherence for development in fisheries in the seven CSRP countries in West Africa" for Enda Diapol/REPAO, OECD Fisheries Policy Division and the Sahel and West Africa Club was to develop an initial comparative analysis based on specific field data to provide a clearer understanding of the stakes related to the issue of fisheries policy coherence and to contribute to the

development of a more detailed and cross-sectoral analytic framework for decision makers and producers working in West Africa's fisheries.

The local realities for fishing populations in West Africa include few alternative employment opportunities and overfishing, especially of local species of high commercial value, and demonstrate the complexity of the policy coherence issue in the sector for developing countries. For example, illegal fishing costs the region hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue while expanding fisheries trade, access agreements and private joint ventures can be in direct conflict with efforts to promote sustainable fisheries management, etc. In addition, few countries in the region have publicly available lists of fishing licenses/permits which makes monitoring the level of fishing activities difficult. According to recent studies by the University of British Columbia, the fishing activity has tripled since the mid-1970s along the Northwest Atlantic African coast while the demersal catch has remained the same at 2 million tonnes. In 2002 the biomass of demersal stocks in the region has been reduced to a quarter of its level in 1950, thus signaling an alarming trend in overfishing.

The report helps to explain the need for simultaneous national and regional answers to address these challenges to fisheries resources management. In particular the report shows how a deeper sectoral analysis of policies at the regional level can be extremely useful in improving our understanding of the extent of policy inconsistencies within West African fisheries sectors and between development and trade policies.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the analysis and Chapter 2 provides an overview of the fisheries sectors in CSRP countries (the seven countries that make up the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission). Chapter 3 introduces the concept of policy coherence as it is employed in the report and its importance both within the OECD and West African contexts. Chapter 4 presents a comparative perspective of policy coherence between fisheries in OECD member countries and those in non-member countries. Its main objective is to highlight the broad characteristics of respectively developed and developing countries which in turn provide an analytical foundation for a more in-depth analysis. Chapter 5 presents the challenges of fisheries policy coherence for development in West Africa. It provides a complement to the more general analysis in Chapter 4, detailing the challenges for policy coherence as they apply specifically to West African countries in six policy domains: environment, technology, economic aspects, contributions of the fisheries sector, social aspects and governance. Finally, Chapter 6 provides the main results of the comparative analysis and offers some suggestions for areas needing further research and policy dialogue.

The conclusions highlight a number of shared challenges that can be managed with greater coherence if better coordinated at various levels. At the same time, it is clear that natural resource management in general requires a flexible approach that should not be confined within narrow institutional rigidities. In the fisheries sector in West Africa, the prevailing situation should incite regional coalition building. For this region, institutions like ECOWAS or CSRP can be leaders to promote policy coherence. Institutions and political decision-makers will need to demonstrate clear political will with regard to the fisheries sector in the coming years. They must nonetheless maintain a level of autonomy by using an approach based on concentric policy circles. They will need to rely on multi-stakeholder dialogue to better define policy priorities while using an eco-systems based approach to inform their actions.

The stakes are high for West African countries, and yet there is no alternative but to address the challenge of improving policy coherence in a concerted manner in light of the complex political and economic policy environment. Public authorities must first have a clear understanding of their own national fisheries policies in terms of priorities, strategies, objectives and planning while at the same time incorporate regional considerations. The role of the private sector in adhering to the regulatory environment and in building local capacity for value addition is equally of paramount importance. One overarching similarity to the situation found in OECD countries, particularly European Union countries, is that West African countries will also need to better define their national and regional priorities in the light of the key strategic issues for policy coherence mentioned in this report.

We hope this joint report serves as a useful tool for decision-makers as they work together with development partners on regional and national policy analysis with the aim of improving coherence for a dynamic, efficient, sustainable and resilient fisheries sector for West Africans today and in the future.

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