

**New Environmental Governance Interventions in the Global South:
Fishery Improvement Projects in the African Context**

By

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ABSTRACT

The eco-certification movement has gained significant momentum in some developing country industries, products, and markets, but the certification of wild-caught seafood production in developing country contexts is limited. In wild-capture fisheries, eco-certification has been relatively limited in Africa since the growth of certification programs expanded rapidly in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Few African fisheries have attained certification to standards set by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the most prominent voluntary third-party certifier for wild-captured fisheries partly because certification to the MSC requires relatively significant resources and capacity. In response, proponents of eco-certification such as the World Wildlife Fund, the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership and the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions, initiated and developed multi-stakeholder Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) in the 2010s to help fisheries make improvements and meet sustainability indicators. Few researchers have examined FIPs within an African context, however, and little is known about how FIPs have been implemented in the African context. Drawing on literature review and key informant interviews with stakeholders involved in FIPs in the African context, this research examines the motivation and role of different actors and organizations within FIPs and the interactions among these actors and organizations. The findings suggest that international actors play significant roles in FIPs in early African cases, with significant international efforts to support capacity-building including fisheries management capacity. Local governments are often portrayed by actors and organizations involved in FIPs as weak and lacking enthusiasm. Producers, such as small-scale fishers, are generally not meaningfully integrated into formal FIP processes. These findings suggest that FIPs are shaped by complex and contested political economies of transnational governance with power differences influencing the motivation and interaction of participants. The political economy of FIPs includes complex and challenging opportunities and barriers to inclusion and participation and a general ambiguity of social development questions.

Keywords: *Fishery Improvement Projects, Marine Stewardship Council, Africa, Actors' Involvement, Gambia*

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AEM	African Ecolabelling Mechanism
ANT	Actors Network Theory
ARSCP	African Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AU-IBAR	African Union – InterAfrican Bureau on Animal Resources
CASS	Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions
CGP	Committee for Octopus Management
CRC	Coastal Resources Center
DFID	Department for International Development
DREA	Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FGP	Fishery Governance Project
FIP	Fishery Improvement Project
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
ISEAL	International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance
IUU	Illegal Unreported and Undocumented fishing
LASCOM	Local Association for Sole Co-Management
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NASCOM	National Association for Sole Co-Management
NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development
NSMD	Non-State Market Driven
SFP	Sustainable Fishery Partnership
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
URI	University of Rhodes Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Wild-capture fisheries, or capture production as often referred to in many United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) documents, is a major source of income and livelihood for more than 38.5 million people and contributes 16.6% of the protein intake of these people (FAOSTAT, 2016). The dependency and ever-increasing demand for various fisheries products by humans for varying purposes have increased pressure on existing fish stocks. But these stocks, according to the FAO, have already been over-exploited by 30% (Selden *et al.*, 2016). In this context, wild caught fisheries around the world have been challenged with declining fish stocks, depleting ecological and ecosystems, and poor management structures. This is caused in part by practices such as poor by-catch enforcement measures, overexploitation and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities amongst other issues (Kirby & Ward, 2014; Gianni & Simpson, 2005 in Agnew *et al.*, 2009). Although there are challenges in understanding the state of the world's fisheries, the FAO's 2016 publication on the *State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* (FAO-SOFIA, 2016) indicates that wild-caught fisheries produced 93.4 million tonnes as of 2014 (FAOSTAT, 2016). Despite major challenges, wild caught fisheries continue to provide the basis for significant social development and food security outcomes worldwide.

This thesis examines new governance interventions in wild capture fisheries, with a focus on the African context. Historically, most regulations on fishery management, like other natural resources, were led by the state and their related agencies or departments who have

the sovereign power and authority over their fisheries, and in most cases, decisions were made from a more centralized system (Bush, Khiem & Sinh, 2009). The effectiveness of federal agencies and departments in resolving rising environmental challenges were increasingly questioned in the 1990s with the rise of neo-liberalism and associated critiques of state-led management of resources (See Konefal, 2013). But, in recent decades, there has been the introduction of many diverse groups of actors and participants (e.g. development donors, NGOs, community associations groups), all engaged and collaborating to a certain extent in the management of natural resources (See Ponte *et al.*, 2017). Eco-labeling, often verified through processes of third-party environmental certification, has been developed and promoted as a second-generation environmental policy tool to help address and ensure sustainable use and management of natural resources. Critics, however, still question its functionality and accountability in the management of resources (Kern, Jörgens, & Jänicke, 2001).

Eco-labeling and related environmental certification programs emerged as response to both challenges in governmental management within the wild-capture fisheries sector and to the growing interest in market-oriented solutions. In particular, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) emerged in 1997 as a non-state actor championing sustainable fisheries through its environmental standard that fisheries can meet through an accredited third-party certification process (Foley, 2012; Ponte, 2012). Historical support for the emergence of the MSC could be traced right back to 1992 with the displacement of over 35, 000 fishers within more than 300 communities from the collapse of Canada's Grand Banks or Newfoundland cod (See Bavington, 2011). This collapse helped motivate Unilever and

Worldwide Fund for Nature (also known as the World Wildlife Fund or WWF) to create the MSC in the late 1990s with the ambition and objective to boost conservation of wild-caught fisheries around the world (Gulbrandsen, 2009). To date, a total of 372 wild caught fisheries are engaged and participating in the MSC program: 259 are already certified and 114 are undergoing full assessment, accounting for approximately 12 percent of global globally caught wild-fisheries annually (NovaNewsNOW.COM, 2018).

Recognizing the current trend towards sustainability, fisheries around the world are increasingly being encouraged by international market actors such as supermarkets, retailers, foodservice companies, and processors to verify sustainability practices through sustainability certification processes. Amongst several certification schemes, many in the wild-caught fisheries industry are promoting the MSC's environmental certification as the 'gold standard' with its independent and accredited third-party sustainability certification processes and accreditations (Hadjimichael & Hegland, 2016; Gulbrandsen, 2009). The sustainability label that the MSC provides to successfully certified fisheries has been analyzed as part of the more general global growth of market-oriented good environmental governance through eco-labeling of products, especially for natural resources within agri-food systems and forestry (Auld, Gulbrandsen, & McDermott, 2008).

In this context, eco-certification within fisheries is looked upon as a market-oriented regulatory policy instrument that encourages better fishing practices by, and in theory, creating various market benefits for those who receive certification, such as potential price premiums or market access. The expectation for proponents is that eco-certification will compensate those who incur extra production costs and who promote environmental

stewardship (Carlson & Palmer, 2016; Blomquist, Bartolino, & Waldo, 2015; Goyert *et al.*, 2010). To acquire an MSC label, the fishery must undergo third-party assessment focused on the MSC's environmental standard for sustainable and well-managed fisheries, which includes three categories of broad principles and criteria involving maintenance of the fish stock health, ecosystem protection, and good and effective management structure (Bellchambers *et al.*, 2016). But meeting these requirements have been very challenging for many fisheries, particularly those in developing nations with inadequate financial resources and capabilities in areas such as expertise and access to innovative technologies. The process to certification is also relatively costly and resource-intensive for many fisheries in developing countries, particularly small-scale, artisanal fisheries (Deirdre & Momo, 2016).

Achieving MSC standards is quite challenging for many small-scale and developing country fisheries like many of those in Africa with little capabilities and capacities. In response, Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) have been developed by environmental NGOs and industry partners to help fisheries raise their standards and practices of sustainability to a level which can potentially enable the fishery to apply for a formal certification process (CASS, n.d; WWF-US, 2013). While many countries strive to seek alternative measures to address some of these issues and ensure the sustainability of their fisheries, many small-scale fisheries in developing countries still face unique challenges in attaining these standards (See Gutierrez *et al.*, 2011; Worm *et al.*, 2009). Some of the factors hindering the uptake of certification in the developing world context and motivating actors to pursue FIPs include the costs associated with the adoption of new fishing

technologies and practices, a lack of expertise and general capacity, complex bureaucratic procedures and a lack of environmental stewardship in the region (Gulbrandsen, 2010; Higman *et al.*, 2002). Despite these challenges, there are indications of change in Africa and many fisheries are standing up to embrace improvement and certification initiatives for their fisheries. This thesis provides one of the first analyses of FIPs as a new environmental governance intervention within the African context.

New governance interventions: Fishery Improvement Projects

Responding to the challenge of improving the sustainability performance of fisheries to levels that might enable successful MSC certification, the WWF, the Sustainable Fishery Partnership (SFP), and the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions (CASS), amongst other actors, are promoting Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) with specific guidelines to help improve fisheries' activities. These guidelines include the participation of multiple stakeholders working towards the shared goal of meeting sustainability standards, with the MSC standards as the benchmark (WWF-US, 2013).

There have been several definitions by various organizations as to what a FIP is. According to the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions (n.d),

“a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) is a multi-stakeholder effort to address environmental challenges in a fishery. These projects utilize the power of the private sector to incentivize positive changes towards sustainability in the fishery and seek to make these changes endure through policy change” (p.6).

FIPs are designed to generally involve, directly and indirectly, key stakeholders, such as seafood producing organizations and retailers, supporting NGOs and partners, corporations

and, where possible, funders working together on a common action plan to improve fishing activities within a specific fishery. Principal requirements such as transparency, dedicated funding, and rigorous scientific assessments all go a long way to justify the objectives and successes of a FIP (CASS, n.d).

In an attempt to meet the competitive nature of the market for sustainable fisheries products, many fisheries, especially small-scale fisheries in the developing country contexts that are widely considered unable to currently meet the MSC's environmental standards for sustainable and well-managed fisheries, are engaged in FIP initiatives to meet standards set by the MSC (See Bush & Oosterveer, 2015). FIPs have therefore emerged as a new institutional, collaborative and multi-stakeholder governance initiative in the broader trend of growing private or non-state governance of international seafood production and trade. FIPs are designed to encourage the participation of actors from the state and private sector amongst other relevant stakeholders to help improve the fishery in question towards sustainability and possibly standards set to the MSC. A range of fisheries in Africa are currently engaging in FIPs to make their fishery sustainable and to possibly achieve the opportunity to use the MSC label (MSC, 2013a), but we know little about how these FIPs have emerged and evolved and who is involved in the various FIPs. This thesis, therefore, seeks to enhance our understanding of these understudied new governance interventions within the African context.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

This thesis seeks to develop one of the first studies on the implementation of FIPs initiatives within the African context. As of writing, there exists on-going FIPs located in The

Gambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Morocco, and South Africa (See FISHERYPROGRESS.ORG, 2018; MSC, 2013b). Given that these initiatives are new in the region, there is very little research exploring and examining how these FIPs were developed or initiated, which actors are involved and why they are engaged in these FIPs, what roles various actors play, the challenges and barriers that fisheries face in implementing FIPs, the level of collaboration and power issues in terms of decision-making, and the significance of MSC certification in the process. More broadly, although FIPs guidelines encourage the involvement of multiple stakeholders, the motivations, roles, responsibilities, and influence of multiple actors in terms of decision-making, policy development, and implementation have received little scholarly attention. This research seeks to conduct an in-depth analysis as to the motivations, roles, and involvement of multiple actors (e.g. fishers groups and organizations) within FIPs within the African context. It primarily seeks to identify the key actors within each fishery and also identify the actors' motivation for involvement and their roles and responsibilities in FIPs. It also seeks to identify whether and how their presence and activities are specifically oriented towards assisting the fishery to be both ecologically sustainable and socially beneficial to fishers, both economically and in addressing food security issues.

1.3 Research Questions and Thesis Statement

This research focuses on an empirical analysis of FIPs in Africa that have developed or are developing processes for the improvement of their fisheries. It assumes that the participation of several actors and agents in these FIPs will generally create variations in the governance system of the fisheries. To determine the motivations, roles,

responsibilities, and influence of various stakeholders' in FIPs, the analysis was organized around questions about the roles of various stakeholders in decision-making, policy development and implementation and capacity building in FIP processes. In doing this, two overall research questions guided this study:

- (1) What are FIPs and how can we understand the development and growth of FIPs internationally, particularly in developing country contexts?
- (2) How can we understand and explain the implementation of FIPs in the African context?
 - a. Who are the actors involved in FIPs in the African context?
 - b. What is the motivation for actor involvement and what are their objectives?
 - c. What are their various roles in terms of decision-making and participation in the FIP?
 - d. To what extent are the various actors influencing the FIP processes?
 - e. What are the constraints and opportunities in ensuring fishers are involved in decision making and influence the outcomes in terms of costs and benefits?

The study results support the following thesis statement: The advancement and proliferation of FIPs through a multi-stakeholder, interactive engagement approach has created a pragmatic shift in governance to a more international scale involving complex and challenging opportunities and barriers to inclusion and participation, with weak participation by governments, and a general ambiguity of social development questions.

1.4 Justification of the Study

The MSC stands as the principal international voluntary third-party standard-setter for wild-caught fisheries certification around the world. It is organized around three principal standards for a sustainable fishery namely, sustainable fish stocks, minimal environmental impact, and effective management (MSC, 2013). Meeting these standards has been very challenging for many fisheries in the world, especially those in Africa with very limited financial, human resource and management capacity. The initiation and implementation of a FIP by any specific fishery aims at improving the fishery so that it can meet the standards set by the MSC, although there are often significant challenges to improve governance or management systems of fisheries towards meeting the demands of the standards. Understanding who is involved in FIPs and how they are collaborating to overcome challenges within FIPs will potentially provide new practical knowledge for improving improvement-oriented practices.

This research is therefore relevant in that it improves our understanding as to how collaborative and interactive efforts in the African context are seeking to overcome some of the challenges and fostering fishery sustainability and certification in the region through FIPs. Understanding this process will potentially improve our understanding of the potential and limitations of FIPs and FIP-related interactions in overcoming sustainability challenges. The findings from the research will add to existing scholarship on FIPs in the developing country context and provide one of the first analyses of FIPs in the African context.

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1: Scope of the Study

This research focuses on Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) in Africa in general, though with specific interest on those whose information could be traced on the fisheryprogress.org website and other available literature from related documents in the region that cites a fishery as being a FIP or participating in a FIP process. There are different types of FIPs in Africa (See table 4) and in different countries, with varying types of actors and agents' involvement in these FIP policy processes and activities (FISHERYPROGRESS.ORG, 2018; MSC, 2013b; CapFish, 2012). This thesis seeks to improve our understanding of these actors, their involvement, and their interactions.

1.6.1.1 The Gambia Sole Fishery Case Study

The Gambia Sole fishery is an important case study for this research owing to its full engagement in FIP related activities that qualifies it as a Comprehensive FIP, which the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions defines using a set of guidelines. As a Comprehensive FIP, participating actors are engaged in assisting the fishery address its environmental constraints and in meeting the MSC set standards. Through multiple actors and stakeholders' engagement and support (both technical and financial), the fishery has undergone two consecutive MSC pre-assessments though was not able to pass or meet all the standards set by the MSC (Keus, Medley & Sieben, 2015; DeAlteris, Cessay & Jallow, 2012).

The principal objective of the Gambian Sole fishery FIP is to identify gaps and implement recommendations from their Marine Stewardship Council 2015 pre-assessment report of

the fishery while observing guidelines of a Comprehensive FIP set by the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions. With a timeline up to 2022, the FIP seeks to address most of the gaps and issues identified by the MSC 2015 pre-assessment and to address it following the three principles of the MSC (See section 2.2.2), with a defined work plan and set of activities (fisheryprogress.org, 2018). Based on preliminary research, a diverse group of actors appeared to be involved in the FIP and thus this case provides an opportunity to examine the specific roles and activities of various groups in FIP processes in the African context.

1.6.2 Data Sources

1.6.2.1: Literature Review

Relevant secondary data were located through literature searches, reviews and studies on FIPs from both global and Africa-focused publications, gazettes or Newsfeeds on fishery governance and peer-reviewed journal articles through online searches from the MUN databases and Google. It involved a desk-top, web-based internet search of relevant publications or articles using key searches with phrases such as “Fishery certification and fishery projects in Africa,” “Fishery Improvement Projects,” “the Marine Stewardship Council and Africa,” “Gambia fishery certification.” These searches were completed through the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) libraries, which has access to databases such as Scopus and ProQuest and through Google Scholar. The documents retrieved through this process were read and categorized to develop a preliminary understanding of FIPs in general and who was involved in each FIP and certification process in the African context specifically, including an identification of information that

might indicate their roles and responsibilities in the process, their objectives, challenges, and constraints. Another important source of literature for the review was from peer-reviewed literature in journals or articles from Elsevier publication house. Also, grey literature from sources such as conference papers/presentations, important reports from the MSC organization website, the WWF's website, the African Union – Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), NEPAD, and foreign sponsors project reports (for example USAID *Ba Nafaa* project in The Gambia, UK'S DFID join NEPAD project in Kenya and Tanzania and fishery consultants reports) were all incorporated into the study.

1.6.2.2: Key Informant Interviews

Through scoping and literature reviews, the researcher was able to identify many FIP related actors in the African region and the Gambia from which relevant actors were identified. The researcher, therefore, decided to conduct key informant interviews by recruiting actors and/or experts engaged in FIP activities in the region, including participants within the Gambian Sole fishery's FIP. These included representative/leaders of fishing groups, fishery clients, government department representatives, the MSC, WWF, industries (buyers and exporters). Participants were selected based on their position, role or involvement in the fishery and the related FIP activities. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the use of guided and semi-structured questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Though potential participants were identified and contacted from various literature and online sources, the recruitment of participants also included a snowball sampling technique, specifically the exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling (Noy, 2008). With this

technique, the researcher identified contact information for other potential interviewees during interviews from initial participants. Several referrals for other persons were obtained and the chain continued until the target number of recruits agreeing to be interviewed was reached. In total, 16 individuals agreed to participate and were able to be interviewed for the research. Due to geographic, financial, and logistical constraints, the researcher was not able to travel to these countries and so decided to employ the use of Skype interviewing, and in some cases email correspondence, to carry out interviews with the consent of participants.

Consent was obtained before every interview and all interviewees agreed to be audio recorded during the conversation. Recognising the time zone differences between the two regions, interviews were carried out at the discretion of the interviewee's local time and location, and by whatever mode of communication they selected for the interview. In some situations, due to poor internet connections, the participant decided to participate through email exchanges where I sent him/her the questions and the person replied by same means. All the interviewees were initially contacted by email and several follow up emails were sent to them for reminders, especially those with very busy schedules. This research process was approved by the Grenfell Campus Research Ethics Board at the Memorial University of Newfoundland.

The table below shows a breakdown of participating actors interviewed within the broader African context who are knowledgeable of FIP processes and activities in the region. It includes members from participating NGOs, consultants and other regional and international institutions in the region.

Table 1. List of participants interviewed from the broader African Context engaged in FIPs

	African Union (AU-IBAR)	Fishery Consultants	International Organizations and NGOs Officials
Number of respondents emailed	7	11	23
Number of failed emails	0	6	9
Number of respondents agreeing to participate	3	3	5
Total interviewed	1	3	3

Compiled by Author (2018)

The table below identifies interviewees linked to the Gambia Sole fishery.

Table 2. List of actors group interviewed for the Gambia Sole Fishery's FIP

	Local Institutions¹	Industry	Promoting institutions/Researchers	WWF
Number of respondents emailed	14	3	3	6
Number of failed emails	5	0	0	2
Number of respondents agreeing to participate	3	3	3	1
Total interviewed	2	3	3	1

Compiled by Author (2018)

1.6.3 Data Analysis

All materials from the literature review and related sources were analyzed with the help of the Statistical software NVIVO 11 Student Pro. Key themes relating to actors' roles, interactions, and involvement within the various FIP cases were coded in NVIVO and used in the analysis. This was followed by critical content analysis of key issues which were

¹ Local institutions here represent people from government departments and the NASCOM (co-management committee for the Sole Fishery)

highlighted and coded into NVIVO 11 using themes/codes drawn from the various literature that explores collaboration and interactions or stakeholders' involvement in the FIPs using the theoretical approach of political economy such as transnational actors, market actors, and power dynamics (see Chapter 3). The analysis focused on important themes that address the research questions and understanding of the overall background of FIPs and fishery certification in Africa with special attention on the general African context and Gambia Sole fishery FIP as a case study.

Digital voice recordings of the interviews that were conducted over Skype were transcribed and coded for key themes in NVIVO 11. All interviews except those conducted by email exchanges were transcribed with the use of Express Scribe Transcription software at a transcription speed of 45% that could permit the researcher to properly do the transcription. All the transcripts were coded and saved in a password protected USB pen drive with access only to the researcher and his supervisory committee. The coded information from the interview was used to address key research questions which include:

- 1) What is the motivation for stakeholder involvement and what objectives have they set for their participation?
- 2) What are their various roles and responsibilities in terms of decision-making and participation in the fishery and FIP?
- 3) To what extent are the various stakeholders involved in the FIP influencing the FIP process, particularly with respect to improving the fishery's prospects towards attaining a sustainability status?

- 4) What are the constraints and challenges in ensuring stakeholders receive a fair opportunity to share in decision-making, costs, and benefits of their participation and interest in the FIP activities and/or initiatives?

The coded transcripts in NVIVO 11 were analyzed using content analysis which recognizes meanings to make relevant inferences from the text (Stemler, 2001). Using the technique as noted by Ryan & Bernard (2003), codes and themes were identified from the responses in each interview. The creation of codes was directed by the questions guiding the research and by using the analytical insights of political economy (see Chapter 3)

1.7 Ethics Consideration

With the involvement of human participants for data collection through interviews, the research was subject to ethics approval at Memorial University. The researcher applied for and received an ethical approval from the Grenfell Campus Research Ethics Board (GC-REB). The application included a recruitment letter that was sent out to participants and a letter of informed consent that informed the potential participants about the purpose of interviews and informed the potential participants that participation in the study is voluntary.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The literature of FIPs in developing countries, especially across Africa, has been growing very slowly. This shortcoming limited the availability of adequate scholarly literature and made it very difficult to have a broader comparative discussion on FIP governance issues through different perspectives and views in Africa. Also, carrying out such research with

the involvement of multiple actors/stakeholders from different countries is quite complex and recruitment is challenging in this context. Also due to resource constraints, the researcher could not visit these countries to conduct face-to-face interviews or even acquire a first-hand observation of their operations. As a result, the researcher selected an alternative method, using Skype to carry out interviews. Despite these limitations, the thesis makes an important contribution to an understudied type of new governance intervention (FIPs) in the African context.

CHAPTER TWO: FIPS AS NEW ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

This chapter explores and draws from the burgeoning literature on eco-certification schemes, particularly research on the Marine Stewardship Council, and other similar new environmental governance initiatives such as FIPs that have been prominent in current discourses on reforming and improving wild-caught fisheries management. As discussed in the introduction, the management of wild-caught fisheries has been challenged by many drawbacks such as poor management infrastructures, as evidenced by the collapse of the Newfoundland cod fishery in the early 1990's. This situation and similar problems around the world created space for new management options over the past three decades. The purpose of the chapter, therefore, is to provide a detailed understanding of related existing literature that examines new fisheries governance options and to better examine the gaps that still exist among these bodies of literature especially regarding the lack of research on FIPs. The chapter begins by providing insights about environmental certification for fisheries and then provides an overview of the Marine Stewardship Council and its standards. The later sections examine Fishery Improvement Projects and the related initiatives in the African region and how the region is participating in such new governance interventions.

2.1: Environmental Certification and Fisheries (Seafood)

The connections between fisheries stock decline and poor management and governance systems have been a major challenge as noted by many scholars over the last two decades (See Worm *et al.*, 2006; Pauly *et al.*, 2003; 2002; Clausen & Clark, 2005; Jackson *et al.*,

2001). Fisheries experts and practitioners have repeatedly called for a more collaborative management of the resource between governments and private authorities (Potts & Haward, 2007). Generally, governments all over the world have the sovereign rights to develop and implement fisheries management initiatives within their jurisdictions (200 nautical miles and economic exclusive zone), and to develop marine protection and conservation plans through various policies, acts, and legislation (Allison & Horemans, 2006). These government-sanctioned policies, such as the allocation of fishing rights, harvest control procedures, co-management systems and fishing gear restrictions are usually developed through local policy efforts alongside internationally agreed guidelines for the management of fishery resources (Frazer *et al.* 2016; Pomeroy & Berkes, 1997). The enforcement of fisheries legislation and policies is often not strong enough to support the effective management and proper use of fishery resources on a case by case basis to acceptable sustainability levels (See Costello *et al.*, 2016; Deighan & Jenkins, 2015).

Considering the continuous and ubiquitous nature of poor management with weak conservation policies within the fishery sector, many practitioners and environmental NGOs have advanced and advocated the need for a new and more pragmatic fishery governance and management systems (Konefal, 2013). Since the 1990s, eco-labeling or eco-certification of seafood has been promoted as an alternative regulatory and governance option through the use of market forces and incentives usually in the form of market access, price premiums or other reputational rewards for sustainable practices (Ponte, 2008). Eco-labelling and certification programs have been introduced in many natural resource sectors, such as forestry via the Forest Stewardship Council's certification and eco-labeling

program, to encourage sustainability and proper use of resources through efforts to harness consumers preferences (Cashore, Auld & Newson, 2004; Bartley, 2003; Jacquet & Pauly, 2007). These programs are also designed to provide compensation in some cases, though not necessarily in all contexts, for the extra production costs and encourage environmental stewardship within various fisheries (Blomquist, Bartolino, & Waldo, 2015; Goyert *et al.*, 2010).

The Global Eco-Labeling Network (2004) defines eco-labeling “*as a label which identifies overall environmental preference of a product or service within a particular product/service category based on life cycle considerations*” (p.1). Also, many researchers in the field of seafood eco-labeling often have defined eco-labeling. For example, per Wakamatsu & Wakamatsu (2017):

Eco-labeling is a market-driven mechanism that incentivizes environment-friendly production processes. Direct regulation, the standard method for resource conservation, guides harvester behavior to positively impact fisheries that are suffering from overfishing and depleting stock (p.97)

Practically, achieving an ecolabel for any product, say seafood, is very rigorous and costly to achieve. It entails detailed assessment (usually biological, but sometimes social and cultural) by experts and stakeholders involved with the production processes of the product (through with specific requirements as with the case of the MSC blue label) which must meet certain guidelines or criteria (Phillips *et al.*, 2003). Focusing on consumer preferences or interests, ecolabels communicate to the consumer at the point of purchase specific attributes of products (Pérez-Ramírez *et al.*, 2012). Some scholars who study fisheries

certification are pessimistic about including economic regulations through the market while others are more optimistic (Ponte *et al.*, 2011).

2.2: The Proliferation of Seafood Eco-Labeling Programs.

Within the seafood industry, there exists a plethora of eco-labeling programmes supported or funded by governments, NGOs, or inter-government agencies aimed at enhancing the sustainability of the resource through best practices (Washington & Ababouch, 2011). Gudmundsson & Wessells (2000) contend that these programs not only aim at ensuring better management of the resource, but through its collective incentive motive, the programs also benefit both consumers and fishers too. From their perspective, fishers may to some extent benefit from an extra price premium to their production practices while consumers are assured about the sustainability of what they buy and consume. In practice, however, these benefits are very rare.

Fisheries are usually categorized into two types, capture fisheries and aquaculture (FAO-SOFIA, 2016). Table 3 shows some of the prominent certification schemes or bodies for both captured fisheries and aquaculture.

Table 3. Some selected certification schemes for Captured and Aquaculture fisheries

Selected Certification Schemes/Bodies	
Captured Fisheries	Aquaculture
The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)	Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)
² Friends of the Sea (FOS)	GAA Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) Certification Program
Naturland	Organic Aquaculture
Marine Eco-label Japan	Label Rouge
Icelandic Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program	
Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program	

2.2.1: The Marine Stewardship Council

Scholars have examined the growth of market-oriented governance mechanisms as a way to address some of the challenges in various sectors through government and private authority interactions (Büthe 2010; Gulbrandsen, 2014; Gale & Haward, 2011). Among such private or non-state governance organizations is Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the most prominent third-party certifiers for wild-caught fisheries. As of writing, more than 12% of global fisheries were participating in its program around the world (MSC Annual Report 2016-17). In a context of collapsing fisheries and growing interest in market

² Certifies both Captured and Aquaculture fisheries

mechanisms of governance, one of the world's largest buyers of seafood, Unilever PLC, and the world most recognized international environmental organization, WWF, partnered to found the MSC in 1997 (Foley 2013; Ponte, 2012; Potts, 2006). From its inception, the MSC has had an overarching motivation to promote and ensure healthy and sustainable wild-caught fisheries through the promotion of robust third-party scientific assessments for fisheries globally (Ward & Phillips, 2008; Phillips *et al.*, 2003).

Since the late 1990s, the MSC has been operating independently, administering standards for a fishery to be considered certified and to attain the right to use the blue label (Pérez-Ramírez *et al.*, 2012). Referenced in many publications and MSC documents (for examples MSC, 1998; May *et al.*, 2002; Potts, 2006), the MSC environmental standard for sustainable and well-managed fisheries are categorized into three broad measurable principles: (1) the health of fish stocks or target species conditions; (2) the fisheries impact to the ecological, environmental and marine ecosystems; and (3) the effectiveness of the management structure or system of the fishery. MSC standards are set based partly on guidelines from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization and the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) alliance.

2.2.2: Operationalization of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

The MSC has two separate modes of operationalization namely, the “MSC standard and scoring system” and the “MSC Chain of Custody Certification and Fishery Traceability” (MSC, 2011). Based on these processes set by the MSC, accredited third-party certification bodies implement a scoring system for applicant fisheries by responding to 31 key questions. Performance Indicators (PIs) are commonly used in MSC compendia in

reference to these questions. PIs are groups of parameters which covers all the three-principal standards of the MSC as mentioned above. Since each PI represents a specific question, there exists 31 PIs that are scored on a range from 1 -100 (MSC, n.d). These PIs are further grouped into different key levels or sustainability benchmarks that show an overall performance of a fishery in terms of its sustainability. It is worth mentioning that these benchmarks or levels, also known as the MSC's scoring system, were developed in the 1990s by experts including scientists, fishery managers, and other participants from both national and international institutions (MSC, n.d).

The sustainability benchmarks simply refer to the required levels based on MSC standards. These levels are scored normally at 60, 80 and 100 levels. So, the MSC requires that each indicator score of 60 or above but requires an overall average of 80 within each of the three assessment categories. Here, having a score of 100 implies a “near perfect” fishery situation in terms of its management, with a very low-risk situation and effects to the fish population and its ecosystem and has an unconditional pass from the MSC. Secondly, a score of 80 represents a “global best practice” with an acceptable management method which has a long-term potential for sustainability and a reasonable or acceptable level of risk with a conditional pass from the MSC pertaining to PI scores below 80. And lastly, a score of 60 represents a fishery with a “minimum acceptable limit” as required by the MSC. It depicts the minimum required certainty or allowed risk. Any fishery below this score is considered failed and a fishery must score an overall average of at least an 80 within each of the three categories of principles (MSC, 2011).

The next stage of the MSC assessment process after the scoring is the “MSC Chain of Custody certification and fishery traceability”, commonly referred to as MSC CoC. This MSC system is designed to give an assurance through details and documented information of the fishery bearing the MSC label that it is from a sustainable and certified source. It provides relevant information about the kind of vessels used in harvesting the fishery right up to the point of first sale (MSC, n.d). It provides necessary information which can assist buyers or consumers or others in tracing a seafood product back to the source. The MSC CoC applies to market actors such as companies that buy and sell seafood products from certified fisheries. As per the MSC (2015), the CoC standard has been divided into five principles which are:

- (1) **Principle 1: “Certified products are purchased from certified suppliers”**. This principle clearly stipulates three key requirements which must be met by the fishery. This requirement covers the general regularities the certified product must go through to ensure it is from a sustainable source, from the initial stock audit information, the physical handling of the products and the assurance that the product meets all necessary conformities to bear the MSC eco-label.
- (2) **Principle 2: “Certified products are identifiable”**. This principle provides information and communication of the fishery product with four key expectations for the product. It spells out the need for the product to remain labeled throughout its entire market process from harvesters to processing and finally delivery. The product may carry a readable invoice at the point of sale and for those carrying the

label. It must at all times carry the information and full name and logo of the ecolabel or other related trademarks and the license agreement.

(3) **Principle 3: “Certified products are segregated”:** With three key expectations, this principle outlines the need for distinction or separation of certified products from non-certified ones. No matter the extent of collaboration between the MSC CoC with any other product, there should never be mixing of certified and non-certified products.

(4) **Principle 4: “Certified products are traceable, and volumes are recorded”.** With six categorized expectations within this principle, principle 4 stipulates the need for a traceability system of the product that provides an easy channel through which a certified supplier can trace back any product being sold once it is certified. The traceability records will contain details of all stages of the product development and the records must be accurate, complete with no faulty values used. Above all the organization shall be in charge of compiling all these details related to the seafood product from its volume to processing right up to delivery.

(5) **Principle 5: “The organization has a management system”.** This is quite an overarching principle that covers six key issues namely; “*Management and training, reporting changes, sub-contractors, transport and contract processing, non-conforming products, requests for traceability and supply chain assurance and finally specific requirements for under-assessment product*” (MSC, 2015, p.11-16). This principle stipulates the need for the organization to train its personnel and make sure they are competent in their activities and duties. The focus here is strictly on recording and storage of all relevant information. Also, the organization must be

able to have necessary contact persons within the MSC to be able to make all necessary contacts and information relating to the CoC requirements. Secondly, the organization must contact the certifier through appropriate channels within 10 days in writing or by email of any changes in their certified products or new MSC contacts for the organization. This request or changes reported will go through the normal procedures and approval where necessary. Furthermore, the organization must be able to effectively communicate with all persons or bodies working within the organization from transportation, processing, packaging, and delivery, with all necessary documents of agreements or MOUs. Also, the organization must within 2 days immediately report any nonconforming products to the certifier and provide necessary information, alongside a request for traceability documents from the MSC and certified for proper labeling of the product with relevant and needed information. Lastly, details must be provided for the fishery undergoing assessments. Organizations undergoing assessment must meet the following requirements:

“All under-assessment products shall be clearly identified and segregated from certified and non-certified products; The organization shall maintain full traceability records for all under-assessment product, demonstrating traceability back to the unit of certification and including the date of harvest; and finally, under-assessment products shall not be sold as certified or labelled with the ecolabel, logo, or trademarks until the source fishery or farm is certified” (MSC, 2015. P.16).

2.2.3: The Marine Stewardship Certification Process and its Challenges

The MSC certification process is an interesting, lengthy and very demanding process for any fishery that decides to get involved. Before any certification can be granted by the

MSC, the fishery must first undergo a pre-assessment. Upon request from a fishery client, a pre-assessment is carried out by an MSC-accredited third-party organization to determine if it can proceed to a full assessment and finally certification and to identify any issues it needs to address or make improvements before proceeding to full assessment (Gulbrandsen, 2009). Pre-assessment results are usually kept confidential by the fishery client, though in some cases the client shares the outcomes or issues raised to participating stakeholders or actors through various channels as deemed necessary by the client (See Bridgeman Group, 2004). With satisfactory outcomes from the pre-assessment, the fishery can then decide to move into a full assessment process. But it is worth noting that the pre-assessment is optional, not mandatory, and solely at the discretion of the fishery (Howes, 2008). According to Chaffee, Phillips & Ward (2003), however, the pre-assessment is widely considered a necessary foundation. Relevant documents emerging from the pre-assessment process are shared with the client and its stakeholders and include information on how the fishery can successfully pass a full assessment to meet the MSC standard, how it can address identified challenges or problems, and where possible, the estimated cost for the fishery to be assessed fully. Generally, the transition from pre-assessment to full assessment is not easy. Many fisheries fail to pass this stage due to environmental and management problems that need to be addressed. And it is with respect to these challenges that FIPs were developed to help fisheries meet acceptable levels of environmental sustainability.

The decision to go into the full MSC assessment solely relies on the fishery applicant/client. Generally, the MSC has seven stages embedded in its guidelines for fishery certification processes as outlined below:

1. **An announcement of the fishery going into full assessment:** Here, the accredited certification body makes a formal announcement and provides information to all stakeholders that the fishery is undergoing a full assessment upon request by the responsible parties who are identified at this stage as clients. Subsequently, an assessment team is set up that comprises three to four members, as well as an auditor or lead person from the accredited certification body (MSC, 2013). The experts chosen are generally people who can assess the fishery based on the three key MSC standards. This announcement generally comes with the identification of the fishing area or locality, the target species, gear types, and any other relevant information necessary for the assessment process. Within this stage, the MSC is informed and then communicates the announcement to key stakeholders. It also updates the fishery's information on its website and issues an official press release together with the client carrying relevant information about the fishery (MSC, 2015).
2. **Creation of an assessment tree³ where necessary:** The assessment team at this stage can decide to either use the default version of the assessment tree which had been adapted to suit most fisheries and to ensure consistency, accuracy, and transparency in the process or to develop its own assessment tree. If they decide not

³ The Assessment tree is a series of interconnected scientific and ecological parameters set by the MSC in which accredited auditors use to assess a fishery and see if it meets the standards to certification set by the MSC

to use the default version, there must be a 30 days period with stakeholder consultations to review and comment on the assessment tree to be used. The assessment tree generally comprises of a technical layout on how each of the three MSC principles will be assessed, based on their specific criteria. According to Howes (2008), there are 23 of such criteria from a breakdown of the three principles. Aside from assessing these principles, the other key ecological and ecosystem related parameters (e.g. conservation plans, open and close seasons) assessed and scored are open to the general public or participating stakeholders for their own comments and queries. This latter process is implicated in the assessment owing to variations in the type of fisheries and conditions in which the fishery finds itself (Bush, Toonen, Oosterveer, & Mol, 2013). Generally, this process all sums up to the final score of the fishery based on the MSC scoring guide as earlier explained (60, 80 or 100).

3. **Information gathering through stakeholder consultation and scoring:** After gathering all relevant information about the fishery through the assessment method as described above, the team then undertakes a visit to the fishery. During this visit, they talk with and interview stakeholders to make sure they have accurate information or clarifying any thoughts. After this, the team then uses the information to score the fishery based on the assessment tree. The use of all relevant information from peer-reviewed articles, grey literature, reports and other technical reports are very important in the final scoring of the fishery in question.
4. **Client and peer review:** Here, the assessment team prepares and compiles a draft report about all their findings and scoring of the fishery. The preliminary report is

then shared with the client for them to comment on and to make any queries about or suggestions to the final report. Thereafter, the certification body or assessment team will arrange and send the report to individual peer reviewers who are experts who understand the whole MSC standards, criteria, and certification process and who are fisheries experts (MSC, 2013).

5. **Public review of the draft report:** Together with the clients and the independent peer reviewers, a complete report is made, and the assessment or certification body will develop and submit the “Public Comment Draft Report” to the MSC. Then the MSC will share the report with stakeholders and publish it on msc.org, where the public and stakeholders have 30 days to make comments on the draft report which contains information as to whether the fishery should be certified or not. It is assumed that throughout these processes, the fishery together with its stakeholders understands the key issues and targeted areas. If the fishery fails to get certified, they can re-apply.
6. **Final report and determination:** This final report outlines the assessment team’s decision as to whether the fishery should be certified or not, but this is only done after comments have been received from the public consultations and comments on the draft reports. If the client or other groups/stakeholders are satisfied with the outcome (in case they refuse certification), they can refute the decision by following the MSC objection procedures within 15 days from getting the final report for it to go into full objection process. The objection is being reviewed or followed up by an independent adjudicator who makes the final decision on what happens to the objections (MSC, 2015).

7. **Public certification report and getting the MSC certificate:** If the final report is not objected to and everything is in good shape, the fishery is then certified. The certification is valid for a period of five years with provisions for surveillance audits and the certification body will make and provide a “Public Certification Report” that provides details of the fishery and any recommendations or conditions that must be met to maintain certification. Most importantly, “... *if your clients become certified against the MSC Chain of Custody Standard, products from your MSC certified fishery can bear the MSC eco-label on packs and menus*” (MSC, 2015, p.18)

2.2.4: The MSC Certification Cost

According to Peacey (2001), the certification cost for any fishery that wishes to get certified can be divided into four key components namely the initial pre-assessment, full fishery assessment, the MSC Chain of Custody assessment, and finally the ecolabel logo or license fees. It is worth noting that the overall cost depends on factors such as the fishery’s size or its assessment complexity and also in terms of data availability for easy stock assessments and the fisheries management structure. The later characteristics directly influence the cost of pre-assessment and full assessment of the fishery be it for small or large-scale fisheries and on the conditions of the fishery and its recommended improvements that need to be done (Pérez-Ramírez, Ponce-Díaz, & Lluch-Cota, 2012). From figures from works of Ponte (2006) and Peacey (2001), the pre-assessment may cost from \$1000 (USD) to \$20, 000, while that for a full assessment varies from \$10, 000 to \$35, 000 for a small-scale fishery to an amount up to \$100, 000 to \$350, 000 for a large scale and complex fishery.

Secondly, we have the MSC Chain of custody assessments which are usually done by an accredited MSC certifier upon request and payments by a company that wishes to use the MSC ecolabel. Its cost varies from less than \$1,000 to \$5,000. Finally, as per the MSC trading arm (MSC International), companies wishing to use the MSC logo must sign a license agreement to pay a fee of 0.05% of the product fee for on-product use of its logo. Any other cost goes to cover the administrative procedures and costs for getting the license, especially for off-product use (Peacey, 2001). So generally, from the figures above, the certification cost is quite high for small-scale fisheries, which are mostly found in developing countries such as those in Africa. Related to this, the objection procedure to an MSC full assessment also comes with a cost. As of 2010, an objection could cost up to \$5,000 to a lower rate of \$1,000 with all necessary parties' involvement in the process (adjudicators) (Jacquet *et al.*, 2010).

2.3: Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs)

2.3.1: Historical background of FIPs

Created from an alliance of 16 different conservation organizations/groups in 2012 focused on enhancing the sustainability of seafood resources, the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions⁴ (CASS) has been a very powerful and dominant body coordinating the whole FIP concept and guidelines (CASS, n.d). They unanimously agreed on the FIP definition, which stipulates its key tenets and expectations. Though the CASS definition is widely used

⁴ CASS is an Alliance of NGOs with well defined and agreed guidelines with the contributions of private firms and consultancy

and cited within various literatures, other proponents of the FIP have their own definitions like the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership and WWF. According to SFP (n.d),

“A FIP is an alliance of stakeholders - retailers, processors, producers, and/or catchers - that comes together to resolve problems within a specific fishery or improve some specific aspect of the fishery that requires attention. The FIP works through key organizations and individuals, talking through management of the fishery and the challenges that it may face, identifying data that needs to be collected, agreeing on a set of priority actions that should be undertaken to improve the fishery, and then overseeing an action plan” (SFP, n.d, p.1)

FIPs generally started within developed world fisheries contexts but have been extended to advance better fisheries management and improvement techniques for those in developing countries as well (See Bush and Oosterveer, 2015; Sampson *et al.*, 2015). FIPs emerged with the objective to assist interested fisheries to improve and move towards environmental sustainability and where possible MSC certification (Deighan & Jenkins, 2015). NGOs and private firms or private entities have acted as major players in the development of FIP guidelines and procedures over the last decade with the motivation to move fisheries towards sustainability. Often, major seafood companies and retailers have funded directly and/or purchased fish from fisheries they see as potential FIP candidates without necessarily granting fisheries a premium (Frazen *et al.*, 2016). Through the Conservation Alliance, who coordinates FIP guidelines, organizations such as the WWF and the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) have been key players promoting FIPs globally though with varying institutional models or modes of FIP operations (See WWF, 2014; SFP, 2012).

According to Sampson *et al.*, the motivation of actors to participate in a FIP often depends on the fishery and fishers targeted and the extent to which they can collaborate with existing institutions surrounding the fishery activities, which definitely varies from case to case (Sampson *et al.*, 2015). With such variation in actors' interest and motivation within FIPs and using findings by the California Environmental Associates (2015), Frazen *et al.* (2016) outlines two general categories of FIP implementation: “‘bottom-up’ development-oriented FIPs, often led by NGOs stimulating general improvements to government support and regulation; and ‘top-down’ market-oriented FIPs, led by firms focused on direct economic benefits for fishers in return for strict compliance” (p. 2). Related to these variations in the FIP model as posited above, the participation or willingness of actors, especially fishers' decisions in these FIPs, is usually important to the kind of improvement to be done to the fishery (Deighan & Jenkins, 2015). But Frazen *et al.* (using the case of two FIPs for yellow Tuna in the Philippines), citing scholarly works of Sen (1990), argues that capabilities are a relevant issue that influences fishers' decision to participate in FIPs and whether they meet the desired requirement in understanding their participation in a FIP.

These particular characteristics of FIPs and FIP implementation in local contexts are also occurring within a global context. Map 3 shows world-wide coverage of the different FIP levels, illustrating the global proliferation of FIPs within a decade from its initiation

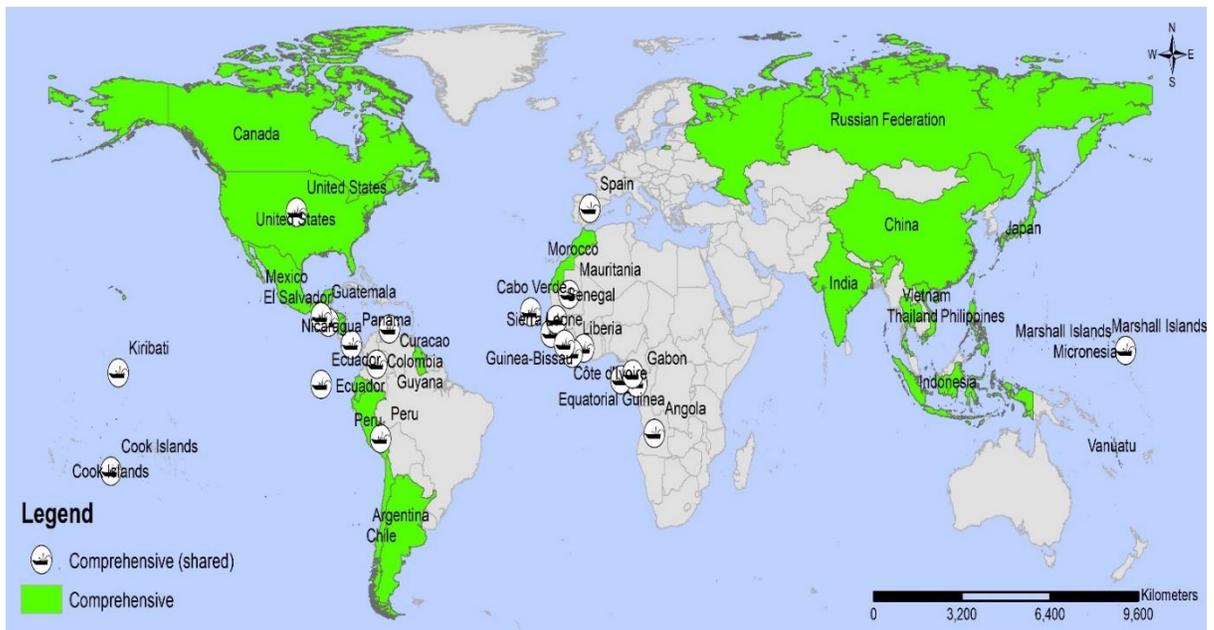


Figure 1: A global representation of FIPs in the world. The map was done courtesy to the GIS expertise of Myron Kings (Environmental Policy Institute, MUN)

FIPs can be understood as part of a more general global trend of the growth of non-state actors engaging in governance. FIPs have been driven by environmental NGOs in the most general sense. In specific cases of implementation, environmental NGOs and private consultancy firms have in some instances played leadership roles in FIP processes, as in the yellow tuna Philippines FIP led by both WWF-Philippines, a private company, and a consultancy firm (Meliomar and BlueYou -Switzerland). This thus gives private and non-state actors more access into fishery management and possible eco-certification processes if the fishery’s stakeholders so wishes, but the ultimate aim for FIP is to improve the sustainability of the fisheries (Deighan & Jenkins, 2015; Bush *et al.*, 2013). Providing support to fisheries that seek improvement or those transitioning to sustainable certification is the official rational and objective that motivated WWF, SFP and others to create FIP guidelines through the Conservation Alliance of NGOs for those interested in the early

2010s (WWF, 2014). The WWF instituted FIPs to help fisheries work towards getting the MSC standard with its processing differing somewhat from those of other NGOs such as the SFP (See Frazen *et al.*, 2016). These dynamics illustrate some of the central actors and processes involved in the evolution and implementation of FIPs.

2.3.2 Governance dynamics of FIP Processes

FIPs are also part of a general governance trend of emphasizing the role of multiple stakeholders in collaborative initiatives. Each FIP is expected to involve multiple stakeholders working within a specific fishery (WWF-US, 2013). With support from NGOs and other agents, FIPs are programs or projects (long or short run) that utilize funding from various sources to assist fisheries that, in most cases, wish to get improved or, in many cases, to have their fishery improve chances to succeed in MSC assessments (Bush *et al.*, 2013). Using market forces and strengths, FIP results and operations are sometimes motivated by the attractive business and working environment between actors and agents such as fishermen, industries, retailers and sponsors to ensure the sustainable use and market access of the resource (Roheim, Asche & Insignares Santos, 2011). These descriptions suggest that the motivations and interests of actors often align but they can also differ in some important aspects as well within the improvement process.

Generally, multi-stakeholder involvement and participation is the main procedural driving force of the FIP as a means to improve management of the resource. The reliance on stakeholders (NGOs, funders, retailers, industry, fishermen and their groups) means that the process requires organization and coordination amongst them. They work together and

move the fishery towards sustainability and possibly certification through the use of the CASS guidelines and other sustainability indicators (MSC, 2015).

2.3.2: Types of Fishery Improvement Projects

According to the alliance as spelled out above (CASS), a FIP can be engaged at two different levels namely; the basic and comprehensive levels. Their differences primarily depend on the level of commitment or scoping and what needs to be addressed by the FIP. The basic level looks specifically at a particular environmental or ecosystem related problem while a comprehensive FIP is a more broad-based and intensive FIP where the whole fishery is assessed and improved to meet global sustainability standards usually those of the MSC (CASS, n.d).

A basic level FIP is generally characterized with its simple model and a very low cost geared towards addressing a specific problem of the fishery. It generally follows the bottom-up approach in its supply chain engagements where the fishery in the FIP can access the market with its sustainability claim and commitments, and a third party or FIP implementer, usually an NGO, is assigned to lead the FIP (California Environmental Associates and Scaling Blue report, 2015). The scoping document for such a FIP identifies an environmental issue or need that is to be addressed following the three principles of the MSC environmental standard with a defined timeline and defined objectives to improve the outlined indicator. Although the FIP goes through an independent audit for activity results, basic FIPs are not necessarily required to be checked against the MSC standards (CASS, n.d).

On the other hand, comprehensive FIPs are high-profile and high-cost models that aim towards meeting all the required MSC performance indicators and possibly MSC certification within a very short timeframe. In its supply chain engagements, it generally follows a top-down approach where buyers and/or wholesale dealers through business ties and other relationships identify a fishery with great market prospects and decides to motivate it into a FIP (CASS, n.d). With such an engagement in the FIP, the fishery conditions generally improve and become flagged as sustainable in the market. This happens with the industry being the primary promoter, with coordinated and specified stakeholders' involvement depending on their own identified activities, and with professional advice from NGOs where needed or possible (California Environmental Associates and Scaling Blue report, 2015). As with the later level of FIP, a comprehensive FIP scoping document must be made public and available to anyone, but with a key difference that it must engage experts that are knowledgeable and able to apply the MSC standards completely in its pre-assessment. Here, there is a well-defined time frame for the fisheries to address all relevant environmental challenges that will help improve its performance and possibly enable the fishery to pass MSC assessment. Through an independent auditor, comprehensive FIPs are audited every 3 years by an expert appointed by the FIP lead organization or partner (CASS,n.d).

In summary, the choice of FIP depends on the stakeholders' levels of engagement, funding, and priorities for the particular fishery. With adequate supporting documents, both levels of FIPs must publicly report their activities and results every month and those already listed as a FIP under the FIP directory tracking website are annually reviewed by the

Conservation Alliance itself. The FIP directory, accessed through the website fisheryprogress.org, provides detailed information on the fishery and the type of FIP it is engaged with.

2.3.3: Stages/Process for Fishery Improvement Projects.

Several proponents of FIPs such as the WWF and the Sustainable Fishery Partnership (SFP) have over the years developed what is usually referred to as different phases, stages or processes of a FIP. However, the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions of NGOs has refined various processes to promote six principal stages of a FIP. As adapted from the SFP, figure 4 shows the various stages, stakeholders, and expectations of a FIP at each of its independent stages. According to the SFP (2017), the various stages of a FIP are considered independent. However, all step-wise guidelines or sequences of a FIP depend on the objectives and goals of the fishery and what level of FIP the fishery is considered to be (basic or comprehensive).

Fishery Improvement Project Process – Stages & Indicators

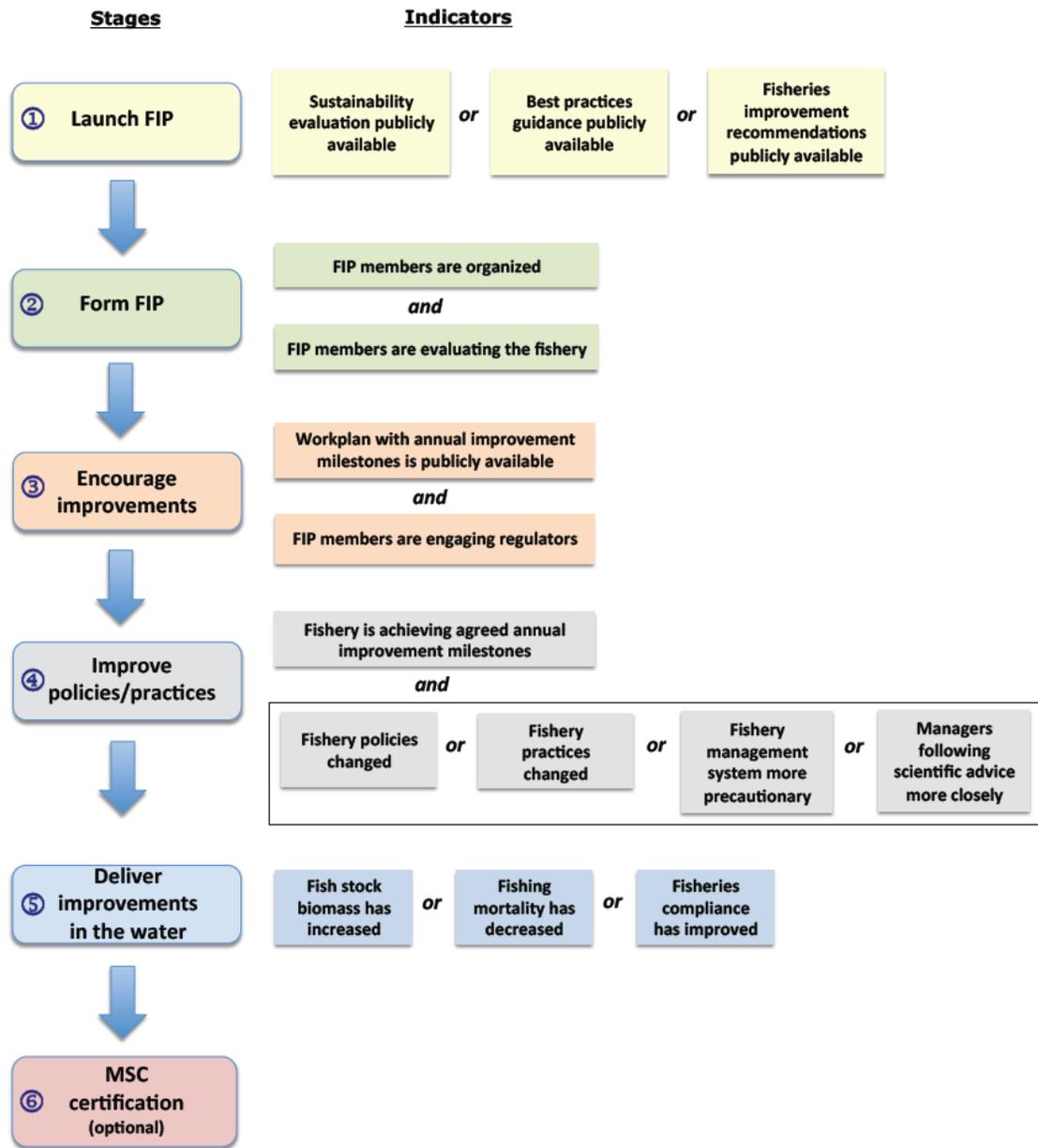


Figure 2. The Fishery Improvement Project Framework. Source: Retrieved from the Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island (2014)

It is worth mentioning that, as per CASS, there is an initial Stage 0, often known as the FIP identification process. Here, a fishery is identified by its participating stakeholders as having the potential of getting into a FIP, has adequate stakeholder and partner involvement, and has viable market access and linkages proven through market demand. From available information via SFP and CASS (n.d p 12 – 17), the 6 different stages of the FIP can be summarised as a process which helps us understand actors, motivations and their levels of interaction amongst existing participants. The FIP stages define the relevant players needed for the functioning of the FIP. They are:

Stage 1 – FIP Development: Depending on the level of FIP, an independent auditor reports from different sources (e.g., MSC pre-assessments, Seafood Watch reports, FishSource evaluations, or scoping documents from the third-party auditor which are generally made public), spells out the challenges of the fishery and identifies items it needs to improve on, to either attain sustainability or meet certification to standards set by the MSC. These processes are mostly considered for the case of a comprehensive FIP level. The assessment report is instrumental as it outlines a different kind of stakeholder engagement, their roles, and expectations within the FIP. Stakeholders here include the fishermen themselves and their associations if they exist, related government departments, industry (processors and exporters), researchers, NGOs and most importantly the funders. There is generally a need for transparency in choosing what kind of stakeholder participates, which can include consideration of their motivation or interest in the fishery in a manner that benefits all the parties. The key point to note here is the identification of improvement needs, stakeholders’

involvement, with observation for transparency. Moreover, all information is readily available to the public.

Stage 2 – FIP Launch: This stage is a direct reflection of the success of the intended activities of stage 1. Here, participants implicated in the FIP are made known and the development of a FIP work plan or processes is clearly articulated and made public. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), relevant stakeholders of the FIP are identified and made known to the public through publications of the fisheryprogress.org website as in some cases, and they all must meet and determine the work plan of the FIP. With a recommendation from stage 1, the work plan is developed based on the lapses or needs identified which will subsequently become the objectives of the FIP. Aside from the objectives, a work plan must constitute a complete list of activities, responsible actors and stakeholders, a well-defined time frame, its performance indicators and the proposed budget adopted by all participants. The work plan is not made public. It is usually developed based on the availability of resources and capacities for the efficient and timely achievement of the objectives laid out. Where necessary, the FIP can make feasible alliances or partnerships with other institutions or organizations which can better assist them, laying the groundwork for further potential actors and multi-stakeholder interactions.

Stage 3 – FIP Implementation: Specifically, the work plan for any FIP outlines the various roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, each of them at this stage starts to implement their activities and provide relevant reports that show their progress. Relating to reporting on the progress of activities, no matter the level of FIP, reporting is done every six months and is generally made public or through the FIP Directory website (fisheryprogress.org),

and this will also include an annual report on the FIP made by CASS through the same alliance tracking website. With an exception for comprehensive FIPs only, the FIP must, after a three-year period, hire a well known technical consultant who understands the MSC standards, to audit and report on the activities of the FIP based on standards set by the MSC. This is usually done by those mostly referred in many certification compendia as Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) and are third-party independent organizations not directly involved in the FIP implementation. It is worth noting here that, the interaction, and motivation of stakeholders and their capacity to adopt better technologies or policies is key to achieving their specific roles and activities.

Stage 4 – Improvements in fishery policies, management, and practices: Every country has legal sovereignty over fisheries within 200 miles and fisheries management policies are usually put in place by the government. But how these policies translate to the sustainability of the fishery is always a major question. So basically, FIPs often target changes to government policies or actions addressing the way the fishery is managed. These changes are intended to improve overall FIP and MSC performance indicators.

Stage 5 - Major improvements in the water: By examining scientific evidence, physical changes and local knowledge of fisheries, stakeholders can themselves attest if there is an improvement or not. An assessment of scientific parameters such as bycatch rates, fishing mortality, fish stock biomass and other ecosystem or habitat indicators enables a good assessment of improvements made to the fishery.

Stage 6 – Getting MSC certification: This is generally an ultimate aim for most FIPs. It is solely the choice and decision for the fishery and its stakeholders to choose whether to pursue and achieve the MSC certification. But generally, the decision to go through the MSC assessment and certification process needs significant additional and ongoing resources.

2.3.4: A Practical FIP Case – The Philippines Yellowfin Tuna FIP

Although there are few studies of FIPs, a brief description of one studied case in a developing country context provides some useful insight into the process. Frazen *et al.*, (2016) conceptualize the inclusion and participation of small-scale fishers within FIPs using two models of FIPs for the Yellowfin Tuna, with both models geared towards better improvements of the fishery. The models include “the NGO led Partnership Program Towards Sustainable Tuna which adopts a bottom-up or development-oriented FIP model and the Private-led Artesmar FIP which adopts a top-down or market-oriented FIP approach” (p.1). These models are in addition to the two levels of FIPs as explained above which categorizes the kind of engagement needed to address improvement issues related to the FIP (i.e., the basic, less cost-intensive FIP and the comprehensive and more resource and capacity-intensive FIP; see California Environmental Associates, 2015).

According to the California Environmental Associates, the NGO-led, bottom-up model of FIP is one in which the participants first focus on getting the fishery improved to an acceptable level before sourcing for better market options. Here, collective firms or group efforts are important for the development and improvement of the fishery. On the other hand, the latter model (private-led, top-down) FIP model is one in which substantial buyer

and market demand are identified before improvements are done to the fishery and here, individual firm capabilities are key in achieving the improvement needed for the fishery to satisfy their clients. With this model, the market drivers, and retailers, with the promise of better market access for the fishery, force participants to get engaged in improvement efforts for the fishery and garner market advantages.

For the Yellow Tuna FIP, the privately led Artesmar FIP is run by two private entities (Meliomar, a private company, and BlueYou, a consultancy firm). They use economic incentives to motivate and encourage fishers to participate in the FIP with their target to meet high levels of sustainability. The next model (the NGO-led Partnership program Towards Sustainability) is a FIP that WWF-Philippines is coordinating. It aims at advancing better local governance of the fisheries (Tuna) and meeting requirements for the global or general value chain for fisheries and fisheries products. By improving the local governance system, fishers are given a place for participation in the process. The aim of this FIP focused on the yellow Tuna is to address some of the problems plaguing the fishery (e.g overfishing). These dynamics, therefore, illustrate the different types of actors and interactions emerging in FIPs in developing country context, including a mix of international NGOs, market actors, and local fisheries.

2.4: Fishery Eco-certification, Governance and Improvement Projects in the African Context.

Eco-Labeling initiatives in Africa are mostly sectorial and national labeling programs. Most sectorial programs or initiatives in the African Region are developed based on procedures and certification to standards set by international non-governmental eco-label schemes such as the MSC or the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), with only one major program identified by the researcher as having specific origins to the Africa Region (the Tunisian eco-label administered by the government through a decree in 1997) (Janisch, 2007). Different regional ecolabelling schemes have been developed and implemented within sectors such as the “East African Organic Standard” and the “West African Organic Cotton” programs. Such eco-labeling schemes are administered by the government with support from NGOs and agencies within Africa or African Union.

2.4.1: Fisheries Sector in Perspective

As earlier mentioned, eco-labeling or certification within the fishery sector arises from failure from existing institutions, policies or acts that address issues of overfishing globally to regulate and control fishing efforts coupled with the increasing demand for fish worldwide (FAO, 2016; Ponte, 2008). Generally, there is still a need for new approaches or ways in which fisheries can be better managed and sustained, and market tools such as eco-certification can be considered useful options (Parkes *et al.*, 2010). The rising demand for certified seafood products in the international market has also necessitated the need for various governments and regional bodies to move their fisheries towards a certification that

can improve their competitiveness (Johnston & Roheim, 2006). These global dynamics and pressures have also manifested in the developing world and African context.

Various wild caught fish statistics show that developing country fishing industries contribute a major quantity of fish or fisheries products on a global scale, but they are still the least eco-certified. In recognition of this existing problem within the fisheries sector in Africa, Janisch (2007) outlines “*The Abuja Declaration of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa adopted by the Heads of State meeting of the NEPAD ‘Fish for All Summit’ in Abuja, Nigeria, in August 2005, to recognise the following*”(p.19): 1) The reliance of many small-scale agrarian populations of Africa on fishing and aquaculture activities for their subsistence and better livelihood, 2) the potentials and opportunities to be acquired by the fishing industry from a more open and rigorous market opportunities for Africa’s fisheries both locally and globally, and 3) the rapid and uncontrolled depletion of fisheries resources, and aquatic communities that threatens sustainability of the resources.

With this fundamental recognition,

“The Abuja Declaration, therefore, resolves to improve governance of fisheries to ensure environmental sustainability, specifically by ratifying international conventions on sustainable aquatic systems and to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable fisheries. The declaration provides clear evidence of the relevance of eco-labeling to fisheries in the African region” (Janisch, 2007, p.19).

This process, therefore, indicates that key stakeholders were seriously improving governance through international processes including eco-labeling by the early 2000s.

2.4.2: Marine Stewardship Council in Africa

In 2004, the South African Hake fishery became the first fishery in Africa to be certified to the MSC. At the time, it contributed more than 150,000kg of white fish to the MSC programme, at a cost of US\$ 100 000 for the fishery (Goyert *et al.*, 2010; Ponte, 2008). From there onwards, the process of certification in Africa has been very slow with just two key pilot fishery certification projects, namely the Mauritania Banc d'Arguin Mullet fishery and the Gambian Sole Fishery, even though there are other prospective fisheries engaging the MSC process at early stages.

Within that context, the African Union- Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resource (AU-IBAR) and its coordinating agency, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), began implementing a Fisheries Governance Project since early 2015 titled “Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Enhance Governance of the Fisheries Sector in Africa”, funded by the European Union (EU) (ARC and UNEP, 2007). Its key activities of addressing food insecurity issues and economic growth in Africa aim to strengthen and increase capacities for access to markets by strengthening the capacity of African Union Member States (AU-MS) in fisheries improvement programmes for eco-labeling certification activities (AU-IBAR, 2015). In realizing and implementing these activities, AU-IBAR through NPCA and the MSC organized a meeting in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire in July 2015 with the main objective of creating awareness of eco-labeling certification processes in fisheries for informed decision making by AU-MS. The meeting had technical sessions with representatives from the MSC presenting on how FIPs could be implemented in the region, but generally the meeting was held under the umbrella objective of an

“Awareness creation workshop on Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) for eco-labelling certification towards sustainable fisheries and market access” (See AU-IBAR, 2015 meeting report). The initiative developed in a context in which Africa’s fisheries were increasingly challenged with the global demand and acceptance by retailers of eco-labeled fish and fishery products by recognizing bodies such as the MSC and the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). Preliminary reports from these organizations show that African fisheries are challenged with lack of capacity and resources to meet the required market expectations both locally and at the international scale.

Within this context and for wild-caught fisheries, the MSC is promoting its two standards for its certification (sustainability and seafood traceability) and encouraging the implementation of Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) for fisheries to meet these standards. As noted above, FIPs generally aim at (a) improving the environmental performance of a fishery (b) involving partnerships (fishers, markets, government, NGOs, funders) (c) providing incentives for fisheries that do not currently meet the MSC standard and (d) creating frameworks for management to address governance issues in fisheries (Deighan & Jenkins, 2015; AU-IBAU, 2015; MSC, 2013).

2.4.3 Challenges of Fisheries Eco-Labelling in Africa and the MSC process

Fishing industries in developing countries contribute a major share of fish and fish products to the international market, but they are still challenged with meeting certification costs compared to those in the developed world (Gulbrandsen, 2010; Cashore *et al.*, 2006). Though simple analysis indicates challenges encountered with respect to the various certification costs and requirements, there is also an overall lack of capacity for organizing

or verifying environmental stewardship by those in the industry. In most cases, there exist no well-organized management structures and information gathering systems that can facilitate an overall analysis of the fishery in question, thus making its certification cost more expensive (Janisch, 2007; Higman & Nussbaum, 2002). However, the ever-increasing demand for certified seafood products in the international market compared to those not certified leaves developing nations with no option but to join the rest and meet the competitive nature of the market. Consumers have become more aware of the importance of buying certified products and are to some extent willing to pay extra for products which are environmentally certified, thus encouraging developing countries to strive and meet this challenge (Sampson et al., 2015; Washington & Ababouch, 2011). Conceptually as Janisch (2007) articulates, eco-labeled or certified products have shown that they can increase the export Gross Domestic Products (GDP) for most nations in Terms of Trade (TOT), but, developing countries, especially those in Africa, do not really have a clear-cut understanding of how to garner these benefits. Janisch (2007) suggests that better trade deals will help such regions through the proceeds from exports, which in turn might help fisheries meet the high cost of certification and get their fishery certified. Another more confusing and challenging issue is the numerous number of labels promoted by various private and public organizations. Many countries are scared and not willing to lose their sovereignty or control of their resources to another private entity. So, the lack of trust amongst some stakeholders is a major problem as these new environmental governance interventions spread to different national and local contexts (Foley and Havice, 2016; Ponte, 2008).

In summary, whilst the MSC certification process envisages applicant fisheries meeting rigorous standards, the reality is that many fisheries require significant improvements in order to meet MSC standards. FIPs have increasingly been utilized by fisheries to meet improve to levels that might better enable fisheries to apply for MSC certification, particularly in developing countries. African fisheries, though challenged with a weaker environmental stewardship and/or weak government capacity, have received increasing support from several organizations in terms of policy formulation, capacity building and improvements in technology and fishing activities. The question of power relations and interests with respect to the collaboration and interaction of the various actors within these FIPs in Africa is usually very difficult to clearly define. Power relations within African FIPs will be considered in the later chapters.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1: Introduction

This chapter critically examines several perspectives and analytical frameworks that scholars have used to understand and explain eco-certifications and its related governance mechanisms inter alia governance structures. Recognising the plethora of related theories often used within such a context, this research highlights critical political economy as an analytical approach to examine and advance a better understanding of FIPs governance systems in Africa. This holistic perspective is useful because it helps identify the type of actors or agents participating, their motivation within the FIP processes, and most importantly the interactions between the participants in the FIP process. Political economy is also helpful in addressing the core objectives of the thesis because it centers around power and interests (who wins/looses/benefits) within any particular realm of multiple actors' motivations, their activities, and interactive engagements.

3.2 Related Analytical Perspectives and Discourse of certification and FIP schemes.

To date, there have been numerous theoretical or analytical perspectives used in engaging variously non-state or NGO-led certification and/or labeling programs and schemes. These frameworks conceptualize multiple actors' involvement within the MSC, and its related concepts such as the FIPs for fisheries around the world (see for example Bush & Oosterveer, 2015 and Cashore, 2002). To provide more insights into some of these theories, the following sections provide a general overview and analysis of some useful theories or concepts by outlining their strengths and weaknesses and how they fit into existing

scholarly debates and discourses within the context of certification and FIPs as environmental governance interventions.

3.2.2 Non-State Market-Driven (MSMD) governance model

Cashore (2002) originally posited the concept of Non State Market Driven (NSMD) governance mechanism to conceptualize the Forest Stewardship Council certification system. NSMD conceptualizes the use of economic policy instruments through market-driven policies to issues that directly impacts and influence the civil society and the general business environment (Howlett, 1999). Cashore acknowledges the scholarly status quo of thinking amongst other key theories as cited by several scholarly topics on privatization, and other forms of governance, with respect to state and private actors' inter-relationships (for example Cutler, Haufler & Porter, 1999; Clapp, 1998). Cashore advances NSMD as a best-fit framework to better conceptualize the role of certification schemes as private governance authorities. The NSMD governance approach sees market transactions and the participation of external partners and actors as the location and/or source of key authorities, while the government is seen in the process as owners of the resources with a specific interest or agenda. Arguably, within such a context, NSMD governance provides room for a more diverse and shared decision-making processes rather than monopoly or dominant rule by a single actor (the government in this case).

The NSMD governance approach conceptualizes certification more of a mechanism that technically aims at influencing consumers' decision or preferences through well-coordinated and controlled market structures, especially within the case of the FSC (Bernstein and Cashore, 2000). In such a system, NGOs seems to provide more of the rules

or standards that define the operationalization of a given production and marketing system as the case may be (in forestry, fisheries, agri-food) with the overall advocacy for better management structures and improved sustainability of the resource. Although conceptualized as market-based, such a system categorically exposes industrial actors to government presence and motivation for such these activities in terms of decision making and the adoption of better management options.

To better provide a more grounded and exploratory explanation of the NSMD approach, the FSC is used by Cashore to explain the role and involvement of varying actors through market-driven policies and instruments for better governance. Through this NSMD approach, the state role is seemingly static and kept to the level of law or rule-enforcers rather than those developing policies, while the market through the buyers has a more active role in influencing the demand and the functionality of the system. Cashore (2002) characterizes NSMD governance as follows:

- 1) “Role of the market - Purchasers, and retailers regulating and controlling the demand of products along the supply chain,
- 2) Role of the state - State does not use its sovereign authority to directly commit to the rules been decided upon,
- 3) Roles of stakeholders and civil society - Authority is granted through an internal evaluative process and
- 4) Enforcement – Compliance by all concern must be verified” (p.509).

Though transnational NGOs play a very pivotal role in the process, participating stakeholders or members of the civil society have the authority and say in the overall process and its validity. The kind of stakeholders' involvement usually excludes government, which in the development of the theory was influenced by the exclusion of government membership by the FSC;

“... no popular elections do exist under NSMD systems, and no one can be incarcerated or fined for failing to comply. In the case of the FSC NSMD governance system, for example, governments are expressly forbidden from being members or voting in decision-making processes” (Cashore 2002, p.510).

From this, it is evidential that, though states have the sovereignty and the ownership and management of their resources (forestry for example), the decision-making process is more shared amongst the participating actors. Participating actors are considered as interest groups within NSMD and they work collaboratively to some extent in achieving their specific objectives which in most cases excludes government influence. Cashore's NSMD suggestively did not provide a strong insight of the interactions between these multiple actors (private actors, governments or NGOs), though later publications provide more insight into this kind of interactions with these private authorities (Eberlein et al., 2014). The NSMD governance approach is insightful as it empirically provides an understanding of the specific role these actors play in certification as new environmental governance interventions. Conceptualizing the legitimacy of stakeholders' presence without much government influence through transparent and conducive interaction and collaboration of actors during policy-making processes is an important contribution to this approach.

3.2.4 Vertical differentiation of third-party certification standards

In this approach developed by Bush & Oosterveer (2015), the authors conceptualize the case of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC minus) for fisheries seeking or not yet able to meet standards to certification set by the MSC and include FIPs in their analysis. FIPs are generally NGO-led and receive more support and attention from the private sector, providing a general shift and new challenges in the governance system and global market influence for such fisheries. With such a scenario, Bush & Oosterveer posit changes in the governance and credibility of the certification process with respect to the variation of actors' participation or involvement within the FIP process (that is, the type of actors present within these processes plays a very important and relevant role to the attainment of its overall objectives). This claim is congruent with arguments by Marsden (2004) on the political economy challenges for standards and the quest for quality within the agri-food value chain networks through multi-stakeholders engagements and participation.

Theoretically, several scholars have raised issues of power, such as the power of privately-led governance institutions in relation to the overall governance and management of fisheries (See for example Bush et al., 2014; Ponte & Sturgeon, 2013). Certification standards over the years have witnessed a drastic shift from the usual state-centric or government dominated governance systems to privately influenced governance systems (Lemos & Agrawal, 2006). Vertical differentiation in this context is envisioned to provide an analysis of how various participants comply with the set certification standards, both those already certified and those seeking certification (Tlusty, 2012). Vertical differentiation posits challenges that arise from the participation of transnational NGOs,

comparing their private governance structure with those of domestic governments all with the objective of improving the fishery towards specific objectives. Congruent with Bush and his colleagues (Bush et al., 2014), vertically differentiation can be conceptualized as either internal or externally-led by actors or agents separately from the certification bodies, and in most cases from a combination of multiple actors, sponsors or even NGOs. This plethora of actors raises questions of power and the influence participating actors could have in certification processes or the quality of improvements done to meet the standards, thus conceptualizing the case of FIPs as a good example.

There has been a pragmatic change in the governance structure within the global economy as Bush *et al.*, articulates through the Global Value Chains (GVC) concept. In this literature, GVC refers to a more industry or firm rule in the governance process from a more diverse or vertical approach. Contrasted with state-centric forms of governance, GVC creates room and accommodates a diverse group of participants or actors' participation, with each carrying out different activities in the chains with more coordination from lead-firms or institutions (Gereffi, Humphrey & Sturgeon, 2005). This shift in the governance structure definitely influences the functionality of the global international market or standard networks (Gibbon, 2008). Amongst scholars (Yeung & Coe, 2015; Ponte & Sturgeon, 2013), issues of interactions between various actors in the value chain that are "firm and non-firm actors" definitely raises questions and debates within the GVC governance system. Special interest for the purposes of this thesis lies in the manner in which these externally-led non-firm actors operate within these processes. Strengths of the GVC governance model include how it can reveal "... the dynamism intersection between the

structural dimensions of regulation and the strategic behavior of firms to gain and maintain access to markets” (Bush & Oosterveer, 2015, p. 1864).

Generally, the inclusion of external actors within certification standards as most scholars posit, creates a very complex and ambiguous scenario. Such scenarios include a situation in which sustainable improvements could be better achieved if the improvement process creates a provision for the inclusion of external actors, thereby undermining the benefits or mitigating the risk it could achieve from their participation and to the credibility of the standard to the wider public. Alternatively, the second situation is one in which these external actors are included but their involvement instead weakens the standard from their varying forms of influence. So, as Bush *et al.*, 2014, posits there are still general questions as to how vertical differentiation within standards and the governance system seeks to promote the credibility or operationalization of the standard from these actors’ involvement since the entrance of new actors to these processes creates new governance structures, initiatives, and dynamics. Thus, their legitimation and credibility to some extent are questionable to the attainment of the improvement objectives and motivations..

3.3 Political Economy (PE) of Fishery certification and its governance approach

3.3.1 Political Economy and Environmental Governance

Veseth & Balaam (2014), defines Political Economy (PE) as:

“a branch of social science that studies the relationships between individuals and society and between market and the state, using a diverse set of tools and methods have drawn largely from economics, political science, and sociology” (para.1).

PE is an interdisciplinary approach that uses various economic and political science theories to explain global and international problems such as those of the environment. PE gives a broader view in which social science issues can be analyzed within a clearer theoretical context. It provides an interactive platform for overarching discussions and empirical analysis of system functionalities and operations with those between actors and resource management. The application of PE in analyzing environmental problems/issues have been instrumental and geared towards solving environmental problems especially with a plethora of actors' involvement and interactions in these processes (Oscar Alfranca in Martin and Nissan, 2010). Newell (2008) posits the need to rethink the challenges and barriers within power structures and regimes in environmental governance globally considering the type of actors or players involved. Newell elaborates the need to position the political economy and global environmental politics of governance in a manner that shows relationships between and relative power among state, market, and civil society actors in global environmental governance institutions such as eco-certification programs.

One strength of the PE approach is how it can account for power dynamics across borders through international regimes and agreements (Gray & Hatchard, 2007). For example, international agencies, NGOs, foreign aids/donor programs have historically sought to revitalize the fisheries sector of Africa from its traditional system to a more entrepreneurial and commercial system through various forms of assistance such as improved fishing technologies and capacity-building efforts (Worm *et al.*, 2006; Bailey, 1988). Using the political economy lens to assess the overall governance and decision-making processes within regional fisheries, Bailey shows how international agencies and the state benefits

more at the expense of small-scale fishers who remained marginalized (Bailey, 1988), thus reminding analysts to be aware of potential negative social development consequences of well-intentioned international environmental governance interventions such as FIPs.

The rise of eco-certifications as an environmental policy tool has similarly been analyzed from a power-centric perspective within an international context. While Newell outlines differences between the state and market in environmental governance, with market actors having significant power, he does not analyze actual producers influence in the process (Newell, 2008). This goes to support observations of Strange (1996) who addressed issues relating to the transfer of power of resource control from the state to the markets within the neo-liberal era. These dynamics in the management of these resources with a powerful market influence arguably exist with the rise of market-oriented processes such as eco-certification. Acknowledging the role of state authorities and various other market and civil society stakeholders in global environmental politics, political economy emphasizes the need for understanding power dynamism between states, markets, and the society to achieve environmental governance objectives (Newell, 2008).

Though the use of PE within this context of environmental governance seemingly looks promising Ponte (2008) argues PE's functionality using the case of fisheries certification to show how despite the implementation of sustainability certification standards through market forces, not all parties are benefiting, especially small-scale producers. And small-scale fishers in Africa are no exception. Though many of these certification bodies are aware of the challenges facing and the marginalization of small-scale fishers (Ponte, 2008), the intervention of international agencies, NGOs, and foreign governments aid can cause

more power imbalance within specific fisheries. Many bodies such as those in the European Union still strongly encourage and support the proliferation of the eco-label initiatives in the African contexts. But the issue of power shift from the state to private authorities or transnational NGOs, who in some situations have more power than even the state in terms of decision-making, remains a major challenge for some governments who have protectionist behavior towards the management of the resource (Ponte, 2008; Gulbrandsen, 2006). Bartley *et al.*, see these non-state certification bodies such as the MSC within the context of global environmental governance with their product eco-labeling tool, to be more of a regulatory and market-oriented policy option, benefitting mostly business promoters rather than the actual producers or communities (Bartley, Koos, & Samel, 2015). Though the MSC has been very instrumental in pushing governments and fisheries towards certification and sustainable use, the involvement of various stakeholders is not well understood, particularly for those in developing nations who are experiencing and depending more of an externally-led system as international NGOs or foundation funding (Ponte, 2008).

Undoubtedly, NGO financial and technical assistance has gone a long way to help improve fisheries in Africa to some extent and help move those fisheries towards meeting MSC standards, but it is crucial to better understand their involvement over the management of the fishery and to analyze who actually benefits (individuals, organizations or industry) from the process. Theoretically, Foley (2012) argues that the role of fishery clients in MSC certification can provide the unique power of some stakeholders over others, especially non-state actors within certification programs/projects.

3.3.2 Insights PE analysis of transnational governance trends

Over recent decades, efforts to advance better fishery management and governance options through a market-driven mechanism such as eco-certification have been analyzed as part of broad-based, multi-sector changes in the political economy of transnational governance (Foley & Hébert, 2013; Ponte 2012; Cutler, 2011). Bonanno & Constance (2008;1996) posits the growth of transnational governance through market-driven governance within the global seafood industry amongst other certification schemes and products as a fast-pace policy-driven system or approach towards a better management of fisheries. For wild-caught fisheries, its management has witnessed the proliferation of several actors and agents ranging from private non-state, state-based institutions and non-governmental organizations. Foley (2017) similarly refers to alternative fisheries certifications as a new governance hybrid to address such environmental challenges. Although the MSC stands as a non-profit and non-state voluntary third-party certification body for such a fishery, its operationalization often involves interactions not only of private actors but also with governments (Foley, 2017). Their overarching argument centers around the type of interaction that does exist between these actors and how issues of power are managed or categorized in the process of decision making and who are the participating actors. Related to the involvement of governments, Gulbrandsen (2009) and many other scholars in the broader literature of eco-certification in other sectors (for example Vogel, 2010; Auld *et al.*, 2009) have identified varying power struggles and contentions over the control of natural resources with a more proactive private actor such as those participating in the MSC or FSC and the respect of state authority and sovereignty.

Conceptualizing the scenario of transnational governance or a hybridized system between private actors, state-based agents amongst others, often raises issues of power struggle and debates in the management and control of the resource, with varying agendas and motivation of these participating actors in the process (Hatanaka & Busch, 2008). This type of governance structure of non-state and state interactions has been a grey area for fisheries management over the last decade (see for example Ponte & Daugbjerg, 2015; Konefal, 2013; Gale & Haward, 2011; Mol, 2010). It is noteworthy that NGO-led hybrid governance structures? increasingly claim respect for state authority by simulating their operational standards to existing state policies and management procedures developed usually from internationally agreed standards (Gale & Haward 2011; Auld *et al.*, 2009).

As power imbalances and dynamism remain some obvious issues between these participating private and public actors or agents, different actors often have different agendas and objectives in their involvement and participation in the process as posited above. To provide a theoretical insight into motivations, roles, responsibilities, and influence of all participants, this thesis puts power at the center of analysis by integrating insights and conceptualization of transnational governance as a contested terrain of political economy. The following sections of the chapter advance theoretical discussions on the political economy of fisheries management within the African context with the following headings: political economy and environmental governance, the transnationality of fisheries governance in Africa, and the power hegemony and systematic shifts in fishery governance within the African context and a conclusion of the chapter.

3.3: Transnationality of Fishery Improvement Initiatives in Africa

As advanced by Foley and Hébert (2013), the global or international market has been heavily influenced by the proliferation of several labeling schemes with diverse set standards, of which participants or new entrants must achieve to garner better market opportunities. Among these labels, the MSC has been the dominant player for sustainable fishing practices for wild-caught fisheries. Still, achieving the MSC label is very challenging especially considering its huge cost, lengthy processes, and requirements in meeting its set standards (Goyert, Sagarin & Annala, 2010). Despite these challenges, many fisheries are still striving to meet these standards and to acquire economic benefits from the market where applicable. For the initiation of FIPs, which aim at encouraging a multi-stakeholder engagement within a fishery to help it achieve sustainability and where possible the MSC label, the type of stakeholder involvement in Africa is seemingly complex involving a diverse group of actors both locally and internationally.

Comparatively within the growing trend and spread of FIP around the world, African fisheries are witnessing quite a diverse level of stakeholder participation and involvement as articulated above. Aside from producers' organizations or association, most of the fisheries in developing countries like those in Africa have a very powerful external or international influence from development agencies, NGOs, funders and foreign countries or industries on the operationalization of their fishery activities (Ward & Phillips, 2008; Gulbrandsen, 2009).

From a political economy perspective, the creation of FIP depends on an understanding of ‘who does what’ and for ‘what reason’ within the fishery. Is there a dichotomy in the objective and participation of the multiple stakeholders or are they working toward a common goal, in a manner that benefits all parties involved? Contextually, any given system with an interplay of various actors/stakeholders within production/trade systems (the market), institutions (state or non-state actors) and civil society (e.g. NGOs) will have issues of power-sharing and dynamism (Weingast, Barry, & Wittman, 2008). As Paterson *et al.* posited in their scholarship, the political economy analysis framework is an approach in conceptualizing governance structures and responsibilities of stakeholders within new environmental governance initiatives and interventions, which could be likened to the case of FIPs (See Paterson, Humphreys, & Pettiford, 2003). For instance, fisheries governance and improvement initiatives in the African region, as in many other areas (Bush & Oosterveer, 2015), are often led or coordinated by NGOs, private actors or external agencies with general objectives to support them meet sustainability challenges, market access and possibly meet MSC certification standards. In Africa for example, the Fishery Governance Project (FGP) for the whole region is sponsored by the European Union and coordinated by the Africa Union through the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and NEPAD division and agency respectively (AU-IBAR, 2015) and equally support FIPs initiatives in the region. Furthermore, as with most other FIPs in developing countries (Sampson *et al.*, 2015), all prominent FIPs in Africa are supported by NGOs, partners or an international agency on a case by case basis, and in most instances are more engaging and proactive than the local governments or institutions (See the Gambian Sole FIP case).

The participation of these external agents or actors within these improvement projects raises the question of the kind of contentions and power differentiation owing to its contested transnational governance structure and actors' engagements (Foley, 2013; Ponte, 2012; Gray & Hatchard, 2007). The question in terms of what their motivation is, and influence with respect to decision making and policy transitions within the FIP processes and the inclusion of relevant stakeholders, especially the producers, remains understudied for FIPs in Africa. All these questions are embedded in the kind of collaborative relationships that do exist among all the participants (Hatanaka, 2010). However, some scholars see the participation of these NGOs, seafood movements, industries, partners and corporations' as re-enforcing various types of management systems or structures (Bartley, 2007; Swyngedouw, Page, & Kaika, 2002). Political economy analysis pulls our attention to the issue of power imbalances and struggles and the facts of different levels of influence and different interests.

One of the central issues to understand is who applies for or manages the FIP. FIP guidelines are generally developed to simulate the standards set by the MSC and which the implicated fishery aims at achieving. But the key issue for the MSC as Foley (2012) posits is that the process requires a particular organization to act as the fishery client responsible for certification. Generally, the yardstick for improvement evaluation of a FIP progress is the MSC pre-assessment as a "Benchmarking Tracking Tool" as developed by the MSC (See elaborations by Bush & Oosterveer, 2015). But this MSC pre-assessment must be requested for by a client. Considering the African FIPs appear to involve many international or external actors, determining who is the lead organization responsible for the FIP is

important. This reiterates issues of power-sharing and influence in this kind of transnational system or structure to the overall management of the resources and, potentially, to who actually is the beneficiary to a certain level (see Ponte, 2008). External partners or private actors, in most cases, appear to provide the necessary financial support for the FIP, making them salient actors in the whole process. With such a scenario, international actors appear to be key drivers for most FIPs in Africa in terms of activities, and decision making amongst others while governments and even the producers are just dormant participants (see analysis in Chapters 4 and 5).

3.4: Conclusion: Power Differences within FIPs in Africa

As Bartley (2003) posited, the lack of capacity, infrastructures and unenthusiastic political will of governments in the management of natural resources, especially in developing countries, has created opportunities for NGOs to step in and address some of the governance challenges. These processes include fisheries, through what some call the rise of the sustainable seafood movement in which NGOs and market actors play leading roles (Konefal, 2013). As elaborated above, FIPs are one such NGO-driven initiatives that aim at helping fisheries achieve sustainability and where possible MSC certification. FIPs generally create opportunities for new transnational actors or the proliferation of many private and non-state actors into the management of fishery activities rather than the government or its people (Bush & Oosterveer, 2015; Gray & Hatchard, 2007). The shift of management of a state-owned natural resource such as a fishery raises many questions of how legitimate it is for private actors is to be at the forefront rather than the state (Gulbrandsen, 2009; Perk & Tickell, 2007; Cashore, 2002). Ponte (2008) observed that

governments and fishery stakeholders from developing nations such as Africa, as a means to protect their resources, are always laggards in the adoption of some of these NGO driven alternatives.

Evidence presented above and in Chapter 4 and 5 below illustrate the presence of a plethora of actors participating in FIPs, which includes NGOs (e.g.; WWF, Blue Ventures), international research institutions and funders (e.g.; World Bank, USAID, DFID), the MSC, governments, corporations, processors, and producers (e.g., fishing groups or associations). With such complex multiple actors and agents within the FIP process and initiatives, political economy perspectives would expect there to likely be power dynamics and multiple levels of actors and interactions from this collaboration. This claim is congruent with arguments of Foley (2013) as to what kind of relationships or interaction does exist between actors and agents and to who benefits from this type of transnational resource management mechanism. The African region is challenged not only with lack of good environmental stewardship, but also with lack of capacity, financial resources within its existing institutions, and often significantly depends on foreign or external support in achieving any global objective. This makes the region experience what I refer to as an international top-down rather than a national top-down FIP process, involving complex multiple actors, and ensuring varying responsibilities in most of its fishery governance or improvement activities. But as Vogel (2010) elaborates, the role of government is seemingly very important as they have the sovereign rights over their resource on behalf of its people, so any related fishery activities must be approved by the state. But then, as Konefal (2013) posits, the role of these NGOs has proven to be instrumental in the

management of fishery resources and reducing the rate of degradation. Thus, in this context, how can we understand and explain the emergence and intervention of FIPs in the African context and what patterns of interactions can be identified are questions this thesis is directed upon.

The following chapters categorize motivation, interest, and interactions amongst these FIP participants (private actors, the state, and producers -small-scale fishers) through an analysis that also identifies distinctions of power-sharing in the decision-making process. Acknowledging the numerous challenges of governments, the direct integration of participation of small-scale fishers through capacity enhancement is necessary as an upgrading strategy for fishers in the region to help shape the kind of power relationship that will exist depending on their roles (See Wentink, Raemaekers & Bush, 2017; Hellin *et al.*, 2009). But rarely does this assertion exist where small-scale producers are fully incorporated into these processes. In many cases, international actors capture full control of the resource and even the policies (Gary & Hatchard, 2007). Since the fishing industry in Africa is predominantly small-scale, many of its participants are illiterate (See Sampson *et al.*, 2015) with little or no knowledge or understanding of the FIP processes, let alone the MSC standards. With such a scenario, conflict of interest issues could arise between the supporting partners, the government and the fishermen, an area many scholars are trying to dwell more into (see for example Vogel, 2010; Ponte, 2008; Foley 2013;2012). Ultimately, these supporting partners are aiming towards creating more market opportunities and sustainability based on the MSC standards and expectations for FIPs, while the fishermen or government are aiming toward better livelihoods and the sustainability of their resource.

Furthermore, Hatanaka & Busch, 2008 provide arguments that the assumed trickle-down effects of the market incentives or premiums of fisheries expected with fisheries in the MSC certification process don't necessarily or clearly occur, especially for the immediate producers and fishers.

FIPs guidelines are developed generally with a reflection of standards set by the MSC. The MSC, as with other eco-labeling schemes, often creates differences in terms of power and management of the resource (Gale & Haward, 2011; Auld & Gulbrandsen, 2010). Participation within FIPs of actors depends to a certain extent on their interest and as to what is their motivation. Seafood industries, for example, often focus on getting the fishery to levels in which it can provide them more market opportunities and benefits, while assuming that will change the livelihood situation of the fishers and their families, while the fishers focus primarily on improving their livelihood (See Auld and Gulbrandsen, 2010). But then, in certain situations, Bush and Belton (2011) argue that the participation of these actors in the management of the fishery, not only by the state, has gone a long way to help address issues such as fish stock depletion. Espousing the claims of Bush and Belton, Bush & Oosterveer (2015), more evidence is required on the role these governments, NGOs, and partners of FIPs with emphasis on what they are doing to support fisheries get better market access and achieving the MSC certification. Thus, it is important to examine the extent to which FIPs could act and provide an alternative and quicker channel to improvements and market access in certain fisheries as compared to other governance approaches. To help us understand the potential of FIPs, it is critical to examine actor motivation and interests, roles and responsibilities, and how these actors and interests

interact in developing country contexts often shaped by different power imbalances between global and local actors.

CHAPTER 4: FISHERY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN AFRICA

This chapter examines Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) initiatives within the broader African context. It employs the use of available literature and interviews with key informants in the region to provide an in-depth analysis of the current governance and management trends of FIPs in Africa. The chapter conceptualizes and provides commentaries on the involvement and participation of multiple actors, institutions, and partners collaborating and interacting in these improvement initiatives and fishery governance activities in the region. The chapter draws from selected FIPs in the region (see Table 4) to provide an empirical understanding of who are the participating actors, their roles or involvement in the FIP processes and policies, the interactions between these stakeholders and above all the challenges they go through in carrying out these activities within the African context.

Many key governmental and non-governmental bodies promote the idea of a need to move Africa's fisheries forward to meet sustainability goals and to improve its competitiveness in the market both domestically and internationally. Amongst other specific country's improvement initiatives, the African Union Commission (AUC), through its Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA), are steadfast in achieving these global objectives. Within DREA, the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) as a special technical arm is coordinating an African region-wide Fishery Governance Project (FGP) with sponsorship from the European Union (AU-IBAR, 2015). AU-IBAR is a regional initiative with a coordinating structure, while the NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development), through its Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), is

collaborating with various African countries government ministries, fishing organizations, non-state actors, and foreign partners such as the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), and the MSC, to initiate and foster sustainable fishery activities and to help fisheries meet certification standards in the African region, especially through the FIPs.

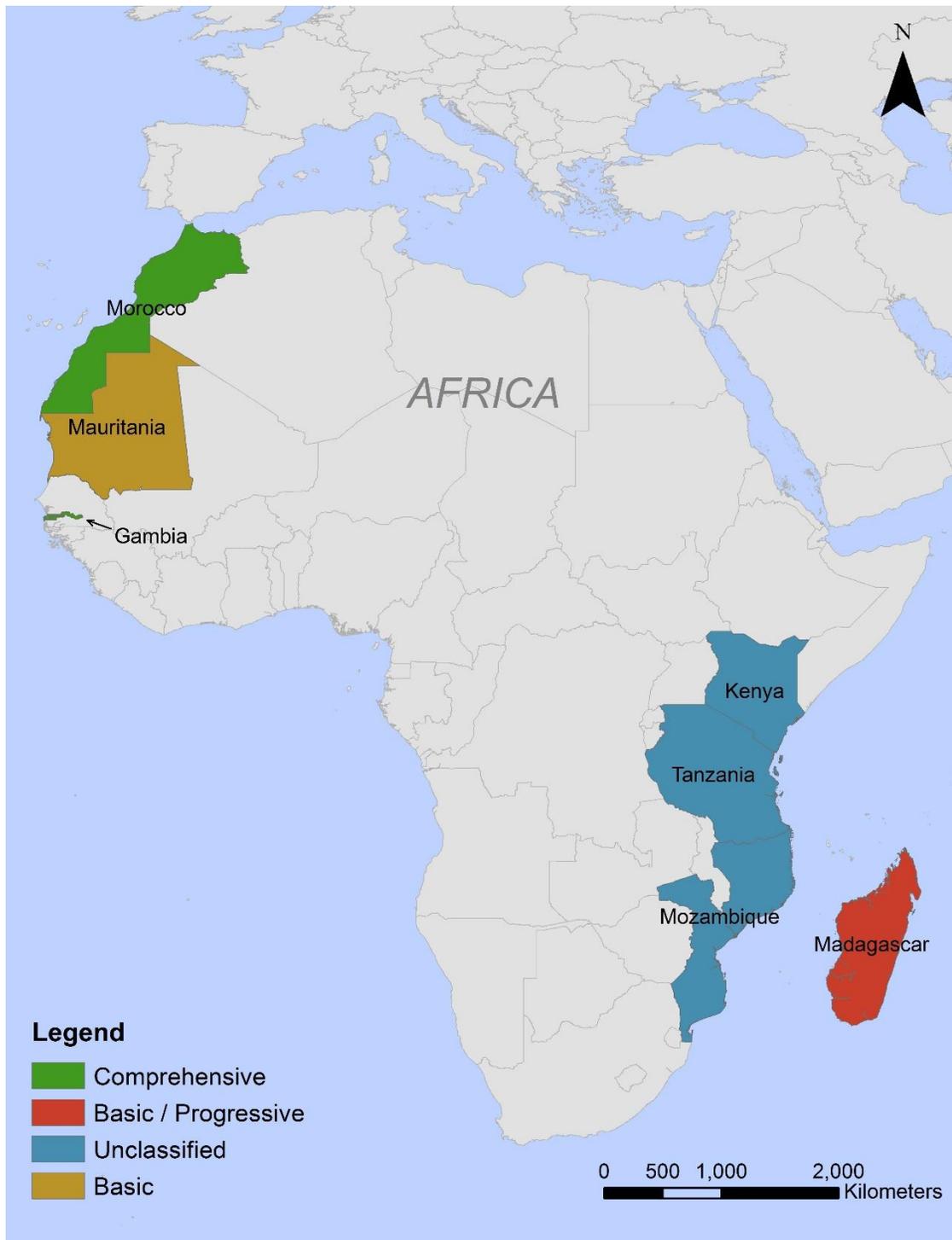


Figure 3: An African map showing the country of origin of FIPs in Africa and their various levels. The map was done courtesy of the GIS expertise of Myron King. Environmental Policy Institute, MUN.

Table 4 shows various FIPs in Africa within the access of the research, the type of FIP and an elaborated list of key actors and agents participating in the process.

Table 4. *Fishery Improvement Projects in Africa*⁵

Country/Fishery	FIP Level	Actors/Agents Involve
The Gambia - Sole Fishery	Comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Sole Fishery Co-Management Committee (NASCOM) - FIP Lead • The Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources and National Assembly Matters of The Gambia (DoFISH) • The Atlantic Seafood Company Ltd. • USAID Funded Gambia-Senegal Sustainable Fisheries Project (USAID - BaNafaa)⁶
Morocco – Morocco Sardine	Comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Gascoigne (FIP Lead) • Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime fishery

⁵ There exists several minor and major fishery improvements and governance projects in Africa in various countries with different funders and supporters. But this research only listed the ones the research is knowledgeable about in the region and about which it could easily find documented materials.

⁶ The USAID-BaNafaa project is being implemented through the Coastal Resources Center (CRC) of the University of Rhode Island (USA) and the World Wide Fund for Nature -West Africa Marine Program Office (WWF-WAMPO) amongst all the other actors (DeAlteris, Cessay & Jallow, 2012. p.3)

Mauritania -Mauritanian small pelagic	Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mauritanian Fishery Authority • Mauritanian Oceanographic and Fishery Research Institute • Local Businesses • International Fishmeal and oil Buyers
Mauritania – Mauritania Octopus	Basic/Prospective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Société Mauritanienne pour la Commercialisation de Poisson (SMCP SEM) • Key Traceability
Madagascar – Southwest Madagascar Octopus Fishery	Basic/Prospective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Ventures – FIP Lead
Mozambique – Deep- Water Shrimp Fishery	Unclassified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWF • National Administration for Fisheries (ADNAP) • National Institute for Fisheries Research (IIP) • Deep-water Shrimp Industry
Kenya – Rock Lobster Fishery	Unclassified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenya State Department of Fisheries • WWF • Rock Lobster Fishery Management Advisory Committee (RLFMAC)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK's DFID
Tanzania – Octopus Fishery	Unclassified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Victoria Fish Processors Association of Tanzania (LVFPAT) • Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development of the United Republic of Tanzania. • WWF-Tanzania Country office and the WWF Coastal East Africa Initiative • UK's DFID

Compiled by Author, 2018

The various FIP levels as outlined above are explained in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Table 4 shows a diversity in the various participating actors within each of these FIPs in Africa and the FIP leads ranging from NGOs, co-management bodies, government and research institutes engaged in the process. Though the research provides explanations on all these FIPs, the Gambia Sole fishery FIP was chosen as an empirical case study for the research to better conceptualize a FIP scenario in Africa (see Chapter 5).

4.1: Participating Actors and Agents

The initial conceptualization of FIPs was primarily done through guidelines by NGOs and related fishery consultancy institutions which created provisions for the participation of multiple stakeholders (WWF-US, 2013; Bush *et al.*, 2013). The varying groups of actors usually (but not always) include at least: NGOs, industries (middlemen, processors, and

exporters), government agencies, fishing groups/association, researchers, supporting partners, international organizations and even Pan-African/regional institutions such as the African Union, collaborating to improve and make the fishery sustainable (Roheim, Asche & Insignares Santos, 2011). From the gleaned documentation of FIPs in the African region, an NGO representative accentuated to this by saying:

‘... A typical stakeholder [group involved in a FIP] is government, industry, fisheries, market, NGO, scientist, researchers and so on and a key strength of the MSC program is that it provides a framework for people to come together and then analyse the fishery and identify what the issues are and look at what has to be done for each of those entities to see actually their position in the action plan, and this falls within the remit of what I do or can assist’. (interview no. 11)

This quotation presents a plethora of varying actors with a common interest, participating to support and improve fisheries in the African region through FIPs. As Auld *et al.*, (2015) posits in the context of MSC research, the objective of these actors is to improve the degradative nature of a fishery and its environment. They aim at enhancing the capacities and capabilities of local actors engaged in these activities regarding how to better carry out fisheries improvements through well-established development initiatives and work plans. There obviously exist contrary opinions to the purview and nature of actors’ involvement especially when the processes are being externally driven or internationally motivated (see Berkes, 2009). Still, despite such differences most would agree that a key benefit of such processes is that dialogue between stakeholders about how to better manage their fishery and achieve certification, is enhanced as a key outcome of such efforts. (Thórarinnsson, 2017 conference paper presentation). Africa, like most other developing world contexts, has

several participating actors in FIPs, who are working with stakeholders for better fishery improvement objectives and outcomes. Though there is a lot of international or external actors in the process, one of the interviewees highlights the presence and participation of local actors too,

‘The members and representatives of the local or municipal authorities, then the fishermen themselves and some of the women who work at the processing industry to do the related activities. In some of the meetings, women were also represented, with the provincial staff as well., But they weren’t that interested in these activities. They might have come to meetings but not really interested. So basically, it was between local fishermen and authorities for each village’. (interview no. 12)

This shows a broader spectrum of actors and how relevant actors are included in the process, but also different levels of engagement and interest. In general, the involvement of local authorities, fishers and the communities make the process more engaging and participatory. It creates a foundation for the quick and effective understanding of the challenges the fishery is facing and how to better prioritize the improvement options and work plan activities. Though there is a need for more meaningful stakeholder involvement, as the quote about women’s participation shows, how various representatives are chosen from these communities is also very important to the functionality of the FIP especially when knowledgeable and well-experienced members are desired. To ensure transparency and better participation of actors, an interviewee emphasized and explained some key issues which must be clearly identified when selecting and involving actors in the process:

‘First, they need to make sure they include all the pertinent actors from the province and also all the people in each community or village whose livelihood come from the sea are included like the fishermen, middlemen and all the actors

like the fishery factories and actors. And from what I saw the fishermen were there, and some processors were present, and it will be nice to include all the stakeholder'. (interview no. 12)

FIPs also go through a similar trend as certification processes, where participating actors and agents through constructive dialogue and discussions, create channels in which local networks can fully participate. As a participant said: 'we work with the government, the African Union works with the government' (interview no.13). As normally anticipated, local stakeholders have a key role in driving the FIP processes and governance activities, though the processes are mostly externally-led. The local actors own the resource and most of them depend on it fully for their livelihood which makes their participation very relevant and essential. Though FIPs are run by specific guidelines, the involvement of local stakeholders aids the whole improvement processes. This is supported by an interviewee explanation:

'It will really depend on the fishery and it varies on a case by case bases. For example, we had in the Gambia, there was a fisherman [name] who was very passionate and active, and he was driving all the process. He will organize the meetings and work with the experts and try to encourage them and so on. And then in another fishery, we had somebody who was an ex-fishery director and he was the one interested in trying to get resources for the fishery to move forward and encourage different meetings between universities, researchers, and government. So, it really varies on a case by case bases. (interview no. 11)

An interesting aspect of FIP-related activities and governance in Africa is the dependent nature of these fisheries on an external body or foreign actor(s) and which highlights the 'political economy factor' noted above regarding other certification research (Foley, 2017, p. 925). Though there might exist national or even local government management structures with available personnel, international actors definitely play a very important role in such

FIPs. These FIPs are therefore relatively externally led and transnational in nature with the interaction of both state and private authorities, with the latter generally more influential in the processes. Put more simply, international NGOs definitely have a strong presence in these fisheries in Africa. As a fishery consultant explained ‘...we mainly work for the WWF in the fisheries’ (interview no. 15).

This statement outlining the strong presence of multiple international partners within these FIP settings was again supported by another consultant in the region. The consulted explained that they were “...always working together with WWF and the government as partners...and we are busy doing an octopus project now starting with one of the certifying bodies -Acoura and working with the MSC in Africa” (interview no. 14).

Although many participants emphasized the key role or presence of these international partners in the FIPs in Africa, some also recounted the necessity of properly engaging or involving local and/or national government institutions if such FIPs are to work well. Relatedly, an NGO participant spoke clearly to this and noted how valuable it is to the overall process: “So, we work with the government but also with the fisheries groups in their small management structure, also with the extension of fishers from the governments and the middlemen and with all the actors in the value chain” (interview no.15). Another NGO representative reflected on a similar process by saying “...we work with the fishing communities” (interview no. 16).

The dependent nature of these African fisheries and their FIPs could always be challenged if the set fishery has put in place good management systems that clearly breaks down the method of operations and stipulates the role and duties of each of the participating actors.

The manner in which producers, the industry, and government officials participate in FIPs, often affects the quality of improvement the fishery receives. In most cases, better stakeholder participation in a FIP leads to a more effective FIP overall. An NGO official explained how they operate with existing or well-established systems and those they considered as relevant stakeholders for efficient activities within the fishery:

‘Then at the regional level, we have the CGP - The Octopus management committee which groups all the regional stakeholders and that includes people like us, the NGOs sector, University, professors, public-private sectors like the collectors; we are working with exporters and collectors’ (interview no. 16).

In some cases, to ensure legitimacy and proper power-sharing among participating actors, elections are usually carried out to elect officials who will run or lead the FIP. Most of those elected to these positions are usually from the local communities to ensure their full engagement in the process and their commitment. As a consultant explained:

‘There is also this CGP where we meet and we have a representative from the Ministry of Fishery, and there we elect fishery representatives and they will be in charge of representing the whole village at meetings’. (interview no.16)

As a key remark to participating actors within various FIPs in Africa, though there are various NGOs and donors related support fishery programs in the region, there also exists an umbrella institution that supports and promotes the enhancement of fishing activities in the region. The African Union (AU) through its specialized technical unit of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture and the African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) leads and coordinates the Fishery Governance Project that supports FIPs in the region. A participant explained how the various actors collaborate and support

these activities through continental think tanks and the formulation of comprehensive policies to address key issues:

‘The FGP is implemented by AU-IBAR in partnership with NEPAD-NPCA. But AU-IBAR is the lead implementing agency. So, one of the activities has to do with access to market and a sub-activity under that is on enhancing certification programs including those executed by MSC and ECO mark-African brand in certification...In executing that task, we collaborated with NEPAD and MSC. . It hasn’t really been completed, we just did one aspect of it. So that’s the background to that’. (interview no. 13)

Within the context of fishery governance and policy formulation in the region, non-state actors have received recognition for their relevance and the role they seek to provide in advancing fishery activities. The AU-IBAR has over the years supported and organized non-state actors from the East African region, which consist of 12-member states, into regional platforms for those who have equally benefited from capacity building programs and key policy issues in the region such as FIPs (Kamuturaki, 2018, Workshop Paper Presentation).

Therefore, FIPs in Africa, like some in developed countries, have powerful external partners and donors, who collaborate with local stakeholders to enhance and strengthen improvement initiatives in the region. Local actor representation within the FIP policy formulation and work plan development processes are recognized and their experience and local knowledge is considered needed for the smooth functioning of FIPs. The participation of this ‘basket of actors’ is seemingly very laudable for the region as it brings in a multiplicity of ideas and participants with different expertise and fishery knowledge which aids the improvement of the fisheries towards the required sustainability standards.

4.2: Financing

Fisheries in Africa are predominantly artisanal or small-scale which naturally makes them disadvantaged in terms of competitive market access. They are further disadvantaged as they have limited financial resources as compared to larger and more subsidized industrial fisheries (Nunan, 2014; Ponte *et al.*, 2007). Tweddle *et al.*, (2015) posits how African fisheries, like most other developing nations, are benefiting from the proliferation of support programs provided by international bodies together with local and/or regional networks. This is often accomplished through public-private partnerships with international organizations, NGOs and even support from some charitable foundations. As a participant mentioned “...yeah, all the money came from WWF” (interview no. 12). Funding for most of the FIP or related fishery activities in Africa is seldom government which in most cases usually have very little financial resources to support improvement initiatives (Allison *et al.*, 2012). One interviewee explains:

‘Is very very seldom government, they might be different in some developed countries like in places like Australia they have applied the MSC standard across broad areas and in some cases the government will put money into it whether or not they call it a FIP. Here is very very seldom government. The government doesn’t really do much. The fisheries don’t have a lot of money for stock assessment or improvement etc. Generally, it could come from donors and there are donors who are interested in the work in Africa. You got the World Bank, GIZ, and in the case of the Gambia sole, one of the retailers was interested in supporting the fishery. So, it comes from multiple sources and less often from government’ (interview no. 10)

Institutions in Africa be they local, national or regional groups working with FIPs or fishery governance initiatives do not in most cases have the capability to independently carry out some of these activities to support their FIP process. They often depend on and receive

financial support from major donors such as the European Union. An AU official explained: ‘The funding is from the European Union. The EU is funding what we call the Fisheries Governance Project in Africa’. (Interview no. 13). If a salient institution such as the AU technical department receives funding for its own activities, this alone goes a long way to show how dependent the region is to external support for any of such fisheries initiatives. The context to meet financial capabilities, especially for fisheries improvements, is a very challenging issue for the region. The challenges are enormous as an NGO official explained:

‘... and the justification is that we are dealing with a very difficult situation not just in Africa but most developing countries where there is not enough money. Most of these fisheries are operating on a narrow margin, the fishermen themselves don’t have the capacity to fund pre-assessment or certification, so is very easy for us to say we got this market mechanism and you will benefit from it in the long term. You know the accessibility issues are just not there, there is no funding, they don’t have the existing market, so we use those to engage with them, the potential funders and just by doing the pre-assessment it gives us something to work with and we can say this is what the fishery needs to improve on and we can approach funders to get more support’(interview no. 10).

To consolidate the global trend of ensuring the sustainability of fisheries through impactful improvements and possibly ecolabelling, there have been supportive efforts from various partners, through the enhancement and support of local networks in Africa. Fisheries in Africa are receiving enormous support from international partners as a participant outlined: ‘Mainly from external funders and donors. From the EU, from World Bank, sometimes is WWF who is also our client but normally the money is coming from international donors’ (Interview no. 15). Aside from these names mentioned, there are other serious funders

supporting FIP activities in Africa in which another similar participant tried to outline. The interview participant suggested that funders included:

‘...GIZ, they are the one funding the octopus at the moment, the Dutch postcode lottery card that works mostly for the developing world. They are funding the South Africa inshore pre-assessment ...[The] World bank funds a lot of projects in South Africa. Looking at countries, we have German, Norway, Dutch etc..’ (Interview no. 10).

Although one cannot argue the putative nature of these external supporters or actors to the development and improvement of these fisheries, it raises the question on the transparency and the influence they have on the fishery since they are providing the majority of the funding for these activities. Each of the funders generally has their own agenda and mode of operations as an interviewee mentioned: ‘...All these initiatives are facing this imbalance because the funding is all external from donors. Can’t really talk more about how much each donor gave. They were many agencies from Asia, World Bank, USAID, the Japanese development institute’ (Interview no. 12). Another participant similarly supported the contention of the reliance on international sources of funding for the functionality of these FIP initiatives. A participant said:

‘The Kenya red rock lobster and the Tanzania octopus are the ones we have been closely involved and the delivery partner is WWF-East Africa and when it comes down to the actual project implementation and making improvements it often comes to funding’ (interview no. 10).

With respect to financing generally, like FIPs within the African context, interview participants suggested that governments invest little to support the improvement of fisheries. Most of the support is from other sources or goodwill organizations especially NGOs who support fishery improvements and certification activities. Donors, especially

NGOs (for example, the WWF has solely sponsored some FIPs) play a very pivotal role in almost all improvement projects in the area as a fishery consultant explained:

‘There was very little money from the government in all these projects aright... All the money came from WWF. So of the projects and this is indirectly co-funded by the World Bank project. The World Bank was partly involved in providing some funding, for example, the octopus fishery in Tanzania and the lobster fishery in Kenya. So, that World Bank project although they did not directly fund them, they provided institutional support. And there was similar stuff in Mozambique co-funded by the state. I cannot state exactly who sponsored but I know there were some activities that were co-funded and that was conditional that the state authorities with providing some support for that’. (Interview no. 14)

Governments in most African cases do not have the financial capabilities to carry out most of its fishery improvement activities. A participant emphasized the point that the fishers themselves in some contexts are very viable and could play a very important role in financing some of these initiatives if given the opportunity. The participant explained: ‘yes, they don’t ask for help, they are independent people [...] fishers have their own agenda, with the fund or no fund, but they can collaborate with other agencies if needed’ (interview no. 1). So, full involvement of these fishers might help support the government in several ways.

Relatedly, a fishery consultant explained:

‘I mean Senegal is not one of the worst countries in Africa but it also has budget issues from the central government who can’t reach out to every fishery community etc, and provide them with the support they need. So I think more than anything now favors the economically wise, the way of setting up co-management initiatives through international donor funding was a way for the central government to relieve itself from this task’ (interview no. 12).

This discussion provides stronger evidence to the view that though there exists both local and national institutions supporting these FIPs, international actors and partner agencies powerfully support these fisheries in achieving sustainability and where possible applying for certification through huge financial commitments. This obviously raises questions of who leads or controls the activities of the FIP (the sponsors, the government or the fishers themselves). However, a participant argued that funders usually do not influence the activities developed for the fisheries and explained: 'If you are even talking by policy, the continental policy was formulated through what we call the implementation of the African fisheries reform mechanism AFR, that even came up before the fishery governance project. So, the FGP is implementing the principle and objectives of the continental policy' (interview no.13).

Based on this research, FIPs in Africa usually receive more than 90% financial support from an external partner or donor agencies. Governments are quite dormant and less responsive in terms of financial investments in these activities. Local industries contribute more on the human resources end than the financial portion of it. There is over-dependency within the region for international support which is quite challenging as funding sources can never be guaranteed, and governments keep changing as do funding priorities. So, governments, local industries, and stakeholders are often limited to committing financially in a co-finance system for the smooth running of these FIPs.

4.3: Institutional Collaborations, Motivations and Interactions

The two latter sections above clearly show a broad spectrum of actors participating within FIPs in Africa, as well as the various funding sources or financial support available from

promoters supporting such initiatives in the region. FIPs in Africa, in general, are more externally-led through NGOs or internationally supported organizations like most eco-certification programs. As Eberlien *et al.*, (2014) argues, the participation of these diverse groups of actors and agents creates a shift in the management system of natural resources not only by government but also with the involvement of private non-state actors in leading emerging initiatives. With such a situation of multiple actors' involvement, scholars within these realms argue that this situation typically creates issues of power-sharing and dynamism between all participants (Vogel, 2010; Auld *et al.*, 2009). The identification and engagement of relevant institutions and stakeholders from the very beginning are important as an international NGO official explained:

‘The whole MSC is built around stakeholders, so our engagement normally starts right at the beginning, trying to bring in the fisheries themselves, at least fishery representatives who represent fishers interest in the stakeholders or committees. It is a supply chain we have the committee, funders, and NGO, together to start the process’ (interview no. 10).

With the more externally sponsored FIPs in Africa, it is very difficult to clearly characterize how they all collaborate and who takes the lead in these improvement processes. An international NGO participant raises issues of the interactions and involvement of these external partners with the local stakeholders. The participating NGOs or external partners as the case might be, understand the need to involve and interact with the people for better results, though they might be bringing in almost all the funding. A similar participant agreeing with this notion explained:

‘So is through consultation and collaboration rather than someone coming from the US and say this is the action plan, go and do this. Most FIP has the role to

develop an action plan, the cost, the time frame etc so there must be that consultation' (interview no.11).

This collaboration and interactions within these various processes can be strengthened and more proactive if regional bodies such as the leading technical arm of the AU have more rigorous and well-coordinated systems that ease transition and interactions with external partners and member states. Good interactions between all participating actors, be it local, national, regional or international, are highly encouraged as another participant explained:

'I think AU can be a voice to support this and engage and help governments in the right direction. Yeah, I will say identifying where the main needs are, we feel that the resources need to be direct in Africa, but the individual government has ideas on that in terms of their own needs and of course getting the other stakeholders through NGO and supply chain' (interview no. 10).

To better consolidate the functionality of these management structures through the existence of stronger local or national bodies such as the Octopus Improvement Project in Madagascar, another participant explained:

'So, on the ground, these are the people we directly work with, but we also have a regional platform called the octopus management committee [CGP] and is a regional platform that includes all the stakeholders in the octopus fishery here. So, this is sort of the platform we use to validate any decision we asked on the fishery and how we validate the FIP' (interview no.16).

Though Hatanaka & Busch, (2008) provide an empirical discourse on issues of self-interest and power struggles that often come up between varying actors within certification processes in other agri-food sectors. The manner in which these institutions collaborate amongst themselves goes a long way to explain the success of such initiatives and underpins some of the transparency and all-inclusive nature of the fishery governance

processes amongst all participants. An AU official explained how the Fishery Governance project operates and includes all relevant actors:

‘First of all, we train their capacity in December 2015 as part of that sub activity. We trained responsible officers in these areas, and creating awareness, about certification. Member states, particular who have things to do related to certification, we invited them to the workshop in Yaoundé as you can see on our website. We requested for nominations, one from the directors of fisheries and the technical staffs who are involved in these areas from selected AU members from coastal areas and those who have issues related to the certification program. I remember the Gambia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Kenya etc. That training was executed with MSC and ARSO. They were all part of the training program’ (interview no.13).

But as Bush & Oosterveer (2015) explain, the various objectives of these actors, and the genuine motivation of every participant, are key to the process. Every actor must be very proactive along the chain of activities if they desire any improvements or enhancement of their fishery rather than been pulled along. A participant explained: ‘But again, there is also demand driven as I mentioned. I don’t want to say it is there or not or is automatic. When member states make a request, it goes through management and, management takes a decision and depending on the availability and if is in line with the mandate of the organization’ (interview no.12). This explains to some extent the perspectives and approach used by the African Union on how it goes about its comprehensive policy formulation strategies and processes in the African region. Complex multiple actors’ interaction within any given context of FIPs in Africa can create contentious governance issues as Foley (2013) advances as for the case of the MSC certification process more generally. Within the various FIP cases or fishery governance processes in the region, there are usually variations with approaches and the implementation of continentally agreed policies with

those of member states government fishery departments, though it could be in line with some of them. Again Hatanaka (2010) posits the need for collaboration or good relationships and interactions between participating actors as an essential aspect of the functionality of an interactive process among actors. These kinds of fruitful relationships are mostly encouraged (at times through the formation of associations to manage the FIP) between FIPs in Africa despite their challenges. As a fishery consultant in the region explained:

‘... in Mozambique, the FIPs was developed with all 3 parties. They will develop with my support as the consultant who was helping and drafting the developing plans. It was sponsored primarily by WWF and then the participant in developing of the FIP. It was completely transparent. We had the government, the research, and the industry. So, the industry is like “okay, we will sit there and help provide information.” But generally, the industry wasn’t that supportive by providing funds. In Mozambique, we formed an association with an MOU with the industry so that they agree on the process that was going to be followed’ (interview no. 14).

This quote illustrates a very good practical scenario in which relevant actors through these associations and MOU’s are given the right to participate and be part of the FIP process despite their own drawbacks in terms of financing. Funders generally provide room for stakeholders to be part of the policy formulation process without any fixed agenda, though one can argue that the whole FIP process is quite defined and clear with a generally fixed agenda (i.e., improving the sustainability of fisheries to standards set by the MSC). As in the case of the EU funded FGP, the policy formulation processes are laid out by representatives from African Union Member States (AU-MS) without any external influence. Though the project’s protocols and procedures were approved by the EU before granting the funds, local internal institutions within Africa and other international bodies

working in the region (the FAO for example) are the key players and participants during meetings or workshops that seek to advance better fisheries governance in the region.

Emphasizing the trend toward greater and better collaboration within existing institutions and actors, a similar participant explained:

‘There was engagement okay, so in the workshops, we will engage with the relevant people and the parties and in Tanzania, they will bring in people from the beach management unit depending on the particular circumstances and in that way, we shall always have some community engagement’ (interview no. 14).

The role of these participating institutions cannot be overemphasized as they occupy a very vital position in the development of comprehensive fishery policies in the African region. The coming together and collaboration between these stakeholders from private institutions, governments, and international partners have proven to result in better planning and running of these FIPs. This is evidential on the continent as an AU official explained:

‘It has this architecture where it drives from the working group stakeholders through a think tank meeting. So, we usually consult action and decision and policies in these regards is always consultative, participatory in delivery’. (interview no. 13).

4.4 Government Responses and Dynamics to FIPs Initiatives

Within AU-IBAR, governments of member states through their various fisheries departments represent and play a vital role in the formulation of comprehensive strategies to move fisheries and aquaculture ahead in the region. The initiation of activities depends in most cases on local regional body action plans, work plans of specific countries, and how stakeholders, especially governments, are engaged in the process. This is especially the

case within the framework of the Fishery Governance Projects ongoing in the region. Governments' involvement in supporting the improvement of fisheries through initiatives such as FIPs is quite limited in the region. Indeed, as illustrated below by a fishery consultant participant, concerns about the degree to which governments can and do support and promote collaboration, and help to create better institutions that can better serve the people overall, can result in situations where the activities are more internationally- led rather than nationally-led:

'It is very tricky right, the thing is, initially co-management fishery project in Senegal were set up through the pressure of private international donors like World Bank, USAID. It doesn't look as if the Senegalese central government was keen on it as in the beginning, so it was more of external international pressure, because I think Senegal is like a very highly centralized government ...' (interview no. 12).

The issue appears to be that with such a scenario, activities which are supposed to be government-led are being transferred to other authorities, mostly international in nature as in most fisheries improvement initiatives in the region. Though the legitimacy and position of government cannot be compromised or minimized, they do not actually play a significant role in decision-making processes, but rather act as policy enforcers. As Foley (2017) recounts, the pressure mounted by these external partners goes a long way to explain why local actors, such as government authorities, sometimes question the political legitimacy of such FIP processes and this can affect the support they offer to the whole process especially with stakeholders' involvement. This categorically reflects on the FIP situation in the African continent where NGOs and other private authorities are key players in leading these

governance processes. They provide not only financial support but also technical support and research activities which makes their presence and participation more unique and important. Therefore, interactions amongst these participants in terms of decision-making and the power of the state cannot be of equal strength like those between and among the external partners and NGOs.

Gulbrandsen (2009) also raises concerns about how legitimate this type of management system can be with a shift from state control to more of an international or externally-controlled system. Though as Ponte (2008) explains the external pressure always comes in as the governments or the people of Africa are often very slow in the adoption of new technologies or governance initiatives, but rather rely on international support.

Similarly, a fishery consultant interviewed explained the lack of enthusiasm or efforts on behalf of a government in terms of promoting such activities through proper interactions with other institutions (interview no. 12).

Furthermore, interactions between actors are at times limited due to the motivation, especially of government actors, to participate fully in the process. As a participant noticed and explained: 'Number one for me is government wanting to make improvements, if the governments want to, the FIPs can move ahead. The biggest trouble is to get people in government to come to the meeting since they are the one that mostly makes the decision and enforcement' (interview no. 10). This suggests that governments, even if reluctant and with limited capacity, are valuable participants in FIPs.

In a nutshell, there do exist positive trends in terms of interactions and collaborations between the participating actors within FIPs in Africa, at least in most of the cases. Though primarily externally-led, local stakeholders participate in the decision-making processes and in the development of FIP action plans. Governments, through related departments, are usually given provision for involvement during the chain of activities for the FIP. But how these collaborations work out in practice depends in large part on the existing institutions and governance structures for fisheries in that country and the interest of the government in supporting such initiatives. The country's governance system plays a key role in this context. For instance, countries having a more centralized government system influences the process and interact differently from those with strong local, regional or provincial government structures who in some cases have the authority and capacity to carry out activities which will directly benefit the people without needing to get approval from the central government. This is evident (discussed in detail in the next chapter) with the Gambian case where LASCOM was pivotal in gathering information and controlling activities at the local level and reporting to NASCOM. Thus, these structures influence how some countries can be more or less flexible in and better at adapting and collaborating with external partners than some others. Most of the FIPs do have strong international participation depending on the willingness of the country and the motivation of the people championing these activities as highlighted earlier. A country such as the Gambia with a co-management system allows provisions for the independent committed members of NASCOM to seek and lobby for support from any partner (mostly international actors) they deem important with or without government approval. Gambia procedures also encourage

interactions between all actors within the chain from top to bottom as compared to more limited interactions in settings with centralized government systems.

As a participant explained, they went down to communities and interacted with the people to understand their needs and this seemingly shifted power from government to non-state actors as Gulbrandsen (2009) posited. The participant highlighted:

‘We went the first thing we did in our first trip is we went around to try and understand the fisheries, we knew nothing, we knew nobody, the only thing we knew was that the MSC had done a pre-assessment for an ecolabel base on request from the GAMFIDA ... So, we went around, talking to communities and talking to them about fisheries and where we thought we were able to help. So, we did that for about two weeks. So, we had a big meeting with everybody, the women, the harvesters. In the project, you can count on the number of people who hold the project’. (interview no. 5)

The presence of external actors is being recognized right down to community levels as they are more engaged in this process than the government in some situations. Local authorities within fishing communities regularly interact and collaborate with external actors on projects that seek to benefit them directly.

4.4 Challenges to actors participation for FIPs in Africa

FIPs in Africa are challenged with several pertinent issues that limit their improvement or their proper management. This research supports the assertion of many scholars who point fingers at the complexity of fisheries management or highlight difficulties faced by fisheries to meet the various improvement and certification standards owing to their small-scale and developing country nature (Wakamatsu & Wakamatsu, 2017). For example, some people argue that standards need to be developed for specific contexts, while others argue

for standards to be applicable anywhere. An interview participant from an international NGO argues that, considering just the nature of small-scale fisheries and its drawbacks compared to those industrial or large-scale fishery is more of a facet. The participant explained:

‘But what I am saying is that regardless of whether it is in Africa or Canada or the UK, sustainability is sustainability. A fishery is healthy when the level of the catch can be sustained over time ... The MSC standard again is rooted in the FAO code of conduct. So [it] is not inconsistent but is consistent with what people across the world who are also members of the FAO have agreed on what is the standard for sustainability’ (interview no. 11)

Though the standard remains the same despite the sophistication of the fishery, many of the interviews from research and industry still argued that the standards of FIP improvement indicators are very high for an African small-scale fishery. For example, one participant made the assertion:

‘But since then we have done several assessments, they never seem to get over the bar despite the progress. So, for small-scale fisheries in developing countries the bar is really too high, and you don’t get any partial credit for improvement although the FIP kind of give you an OK, you are in a FIP and you are working towards certification and some companies can buy you fish if you are in the FIP and not certified, like the Walmart or something’. (interview no. 3)

Another participant similarly explained the high standard level for such fisheries:

‘I mean especially in our situation, the standards are really hard, and you know more and more MSC starts realizing that their model isn’t adapted to small-scale fisheries and they are good for large-scale fisheries that have a lot of money’. (interview no. 16)

Regardless of the inextricable link between the cost of running a FIP and meeting the required sustainability standards, African FIPs have several drawbacks that make it very

challenging for them to achieve or carry out adequate levels of improvements with or without external support considering their financial challenges and limitations in the region. Underpinning the enhancement of sustainable fishery practices by all participating actors in Africa is always challenging due to the numerous factors affecting the area. A low level of peer education, the available? modes of communication and the cultural practices of the people are three examples of limiting factors with externally-led FIP projects (CapFish, 2012). For instance, it takes considerable time for local people to develop the trust of the actors needed to provide relevant information to FIP leaders that will help them with their activities and plans. Usually, these fishers always have a lot of information to share officials and leaders as a participant said:

‘I don’t say it was minimal, they were engaged when information was needed. But generally, direct community engagement was limited. It was mostly done with the government, district officer and the provision of such information’.
(Interview no. 14)

This suggests that while participation and collaboration are relatively robust procedurally, the actual engagement and capacity is quite variable and faces numerous challenges and barriers. Firstly, key participants in these African fisheries (that is the small-scale fishers) usually have little or no formal education and depend on their traditional knowledge to fish and carry out other related activities, especially in their local languages as a fishery consultant in the region posited during our interview session. With this level of illiteracy amongst fishers in the region, the promotion of better management, policy options, and new technologies is very challenging as an NGO participant explained: ‘We are dealing with communities with high illiteracy rates’ (interview no. 16). This challenge obviously affects the full participation of these people during the development of the FIP policies or its work

plan. Operating within such a context with low literacy levels, and language barriers that are quite complex make finding and motivating actors such as fishers difficult. A fishery consultant explained:

‘Generally, the understanding of the MSC and the general works of FIPs is very poor in the communities because is a technical thing. And the communities are generally the language and peer education are also a problem’. (interview no. 14)

Secondly, there are issues of very limited human and financial resources for the smooth operationalization of FIP activities and this affects the willingness of the government and fishers to participate in the process. Most of the funding from external sources are usually used in building the capacity of local staff to assist in the process. As a participant explained:

‘...generally, capacity will be the big thing—having human resource and financial capacity to deliver these improvements and for it to be long-lasting. The other thing is to have fishermen and government at both ends to make it happen’. (interview no. 10)

Although the capacity building is always prioritized within FIP activities, there is always the problem of trained personnel leaving and failing to commit to their role and this causes a very big gap or problems with the smooth functioning of the FIP. Their absence or departure could impede the process especially if the absent person had a key role. As a consultant explained: ‘The person I was with has now left unfortunately and the project is in the middle of nowhere’ (interview no. 14). Of course, there is also a need for continued or ongoing capacity building among those who do not leave as another participant

explained: ‘... there is a need for key capacity building so that people are willing to commit in to’ (interview no. 11).

So, capacity development remains a very key challenge. As another participant explained:

‘The next biggest is capacity [since] they don’t always have the capacity to implement the project. You need to take the skills and expertise, you need to take people from institutions, from government structures to try and get them involved in the implementation of the project’ (Interview no. 14).

Furthermore, another issue is the financial commitment from the stakeholders themselves to support these activities. A participant raised the issue of how FIPs in the region are generally overdependent on external funding:

‘The biggest one, of course, is funding, they always need more money to fund the project ... Like on the funding issue, I don’t mean this in any disparity way, African countries generally wait for money to come in and then they take the money and they spend it and try and do a project and they wait for the next lot of money to come in and do more’ (interview no. 14)

The problem of governments, industries or even fishers not committed to supporting financially these FIP related activities is an additional major drawback. This ubiquitous situation on the continent makes progress within FIP initiatives stall or become very stagnant. In terms of industries, despite their typical engagement in FIP activities, they are seldom active from a financial perspective in most cases as an interviewee explained:

‘None of those projects in the region did we get any support. No financial support from the industry. We do some support in the sense of verbal support and access to the fishery and that sort of thing. And the fishing industry was engaged in these projects, there was generally a reluctance to engage in the program’ (Interview no. 14)

A participant explained that this lack of industry and government financial support happens to be a major drawback to the management and commitment of this group of actors in FIP processes: ‘None, I think one of the biggest problems [...] think the government is another big one. The lack of government support’ (interview no. 16). As interview no. 14 explained, the lack of financial support in a co-financing manner for these FIPs makes commitment very lacking and forces in most cases the external partner being the one doing all the activities while the government is simply observing the process.

Additionally, access to good and quality fishery data, including good surveillance systems for these fisheries, remains a very big issue especially for scientists working in the area. African fisheries have very poor data management systems and in most cases lack experts to handle such issues as one participant reiterated:

‘The most difficult [issue] about Africa is that there [are] a lot of fishermen and there is no good control and enforcement and there is no real data about landing, and many, many species and is very difficult to manage the fisheries and to assess stocks there because you don’t have information about the species and this kind of things and is the most difficult thing to get good data from the stock will help to manage’ (Interview no.15).

Furthermore, the lack of proper surveillance systems due to inadequate technologies and expertise makes the fisheries very exposed to IUU fishing especially by foreign boats with signed MOU’s with the governments. An interviewee made such assertions: ‘... they just don’t have to worry about having to answer to the local authorities because the local authorities don’t have the means for surveillance or patrol boats or staffs’ (Interview no. 12).

Surveillance technically is an issue in ensuring agreed improvement decisions and that plans, and activities are respected for the attainment of their objective. Addressing these lack of stock assessments and good data gathering systems problems remains an issue for many FIPs in Africa. A participant explained that a major challenge consists of:

‘... the capacity for governance and management. Just to ensure compliance, but to have compliance you also need to have data and one of the things missing from a lot of fishery management having a good quality stock assessment, management plans, and policies, management procedures ... A lot of cases, the African fisheries suffers through access control and governance and also information of the fishery’. (interview no. 10)

As noted by a participant, the governance system of most African institutions and governments are also major challenges. There is no certainty on how long government officials can be in their position. A project could be initiated by an official but later on, that official could be removed or changed from the position. Another person who has little or no idea or interest in the project may take her/his place. As a participant noted: ‘the other one is politics because politics is a problem, you find people being taken away from their position because of whatever reason, particularly in Mozambique it was a problem’ (interview no. 14). The uncertain nature of a key actor’s sustained involvement causes a lot of trouble for and is a barrier to successful FIP activities. Also, the passion with which certain appointed individuals participate in these initiatives varies from person to person. Whether they are replaced due to political reasons such as a cabinet shuffle, or other reasons, FIP progress may have delayed as a result.

Finally, the level of sensitization amongst the people on these activities is always very limiting. Many of the fishers engaged with these fisheries do not exactly know how they

will benefit or what are the long-term advantages of participating in such a process. A participant explained:

‘The first one is to organize fishers and fishing space. There are lots of conflicts with moving and set gear. The second one is to have good sensitization on how to stop it and enforce the law. And then some bad practices like nets doing bycatch, so the main issue is the juvenile fishing and organize fishing space’.
(Interview no. 1)

In sum, although FIPs in Africa is challenged by significant issues, they also show considerable promise as a vehicle for change. Multiple actors and stakeholders are engaged in FIP processes and initiatives in varied locations. Governments typically participate through departmental and political support. There also exists the involvement of multiple local and international actors (for example seafood industries, NGOs, international support from government and fishers’ associations as in most cases). There is typically a significant degree of collaboration and interaction between and among all stakeholders involved. Different actors participate for different reasons. A fisher’s motivation to participate in these FIPs is greatly influenced by NGOs through community support programs and their involvement in local fishery governance processes. Market or other economic incentives, at least for the moment, may not be their principal focus for getting involved at least in the beginning. Some are interested in creating improvements that will, in the long run, create more market opportunities for them. Overall, community and fisher involvement, interest and motivation for becoming active in FIP projects is mixed. Some groups or actors have more capacity to participate than others. The capacity of some local groups and even government agencies to support FIPs can be extremely limited. Typically, while some of the participating actors are focused on short-term efforts that can ensure sustainability and

or conservation of their fisheries, others are more focused on the longer-term goal of achieving MSC certification where there are possibilities and market potentials.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE GAMBIA SOLE FISHERY -A COMPREHENSIVE FIP CASE STUDY

5.1: Background of the Sole Fishery

Sole fish is the most important and highly commercialized fish in the Gambia, with its 2006 harvest accounting for 1, 559 MT out of the 40, 000 MT total fish landings in the country (Fatajo, Tobey & Drammeh, 2010). As per the Gambian Department of Fisheries (Gambia DOF, 2006), the sole fishery business sector alone accounts for more than 5000 jobs in the country and other livelihoods indirectly depending on the fishery.

The country's fisheries legislation, through the Fishery Act of 2007, provides a legal framework for fisheries management and makes provisions for the inclusion of a co-management structure for better management of the fishery. Within the African continent, the Gambian fishery co-management system makes provisions for the management of fishery resources in the country by separate authorities aside from those of the Department of Fishery (DoF). This policy creates space within the governance of the resources for the participation of actors such as local fishers, fishers' groups/associations, government, experts and officials coordinating activities of the co-managed system. The Fishery Act states:

‘Section 14 of the Act gives power to the Minister of Fisheries to declare Special Management Areas for the purpose of community-based fisheries conservation and management, while section 15 of the Act also gives power to the Minister to establish Community Fisheries Centers (CFCs) for the purpose of community-based fisheries conservation and management of Special Management Areas or part of it’ (Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island, 2014, p.1).

This Fishery's Act, however, was weak and never implemented according to scoping by researchers from the Coastal Resources Center (CRC) through the USAID *Ba Nafaa* project (CRC-URI, 2014). In line with such evaluations and needs to better strengthen the Act, in 2009, the Gambia Department of Fisheries (DoFish) requested CRC through the *Ba, Nafaa* project, to integrate components to improve the sole fishery. Through stakeholders' consultations led by CRC, a revised legislation for the proposed co-management system of fisheries in the country was developed and enshrined in the constitution. This latter move made provisions for the involvement of all relevant parties and resulted in the development of a work plan for the sole fishery (CRC-URI, 2014). Though not considered a FIP as of that time, the process laid the foundation for the eventual development of a FIP in the Gambia.

Prior to this improvement effort for the management of this fishery, GAMFIDA (Gambia Artisanal Fisheries Development Agency⁷), in 2007, invited experts from a third-party certification body accredited to the MSC to do a pre-assessment of the sole fisheries to see if they could go into full assessment and obtain the MSC certification. However, they failed to pass the MSC pre-assessment phase. All the relevant background information and the recommendations from the failed MSC pre-assessment nevertheless provided the basis on which the *Ba Nafaa*-led project developed its fisheries improvement action plan including community consultations. To date, actors such as The Department of Fisheries, *Ba Nafaa*, Atlantic Seafood, GAMFIDA, the University of Rhode Island, and WWF-West Africa

⁷ Created in 1997, GAMFIDA is a representation of small-scale fishers in the Gambia, who mobilise themselves and share relevant information and training to improve their fishing activities and outputs. The association has a credit and saving facilities for fishers within Banjul and other related villages.

Marine Program Office (WWF-WAMPO) continue to collaborate to improve the fisheries towards sustainability and possibly MSC certification (CRC-URI, 2014). The presence and participation of these actors have been driven by the motivation of the people themselves through GAMFIDA who initiated procedures for the first pre-assessment in 2007. The motivation and enthusiasm for improvements and advancement of the FIP by the locals have been a key aspect that attracted many international actors and researchers with various funding support (CRC-URI, 2014). This, amongst most other FIPs in Africa, makes the Gambian case a very interesting one for the region as the people's efforts were key in attracting other actors and because it has a local co-managed structure (NASCOM), unlike others FIPs in the African context which are more directly led and coordinated by external NGOs.

5.1.1 The Gambian Sole Fishery FIP

According to the updated fisheryprogress.org tracking website for fisheries participating in FIPs, the Gambian Sole fishery and the Moroccan Sardine fishery were, as of writing, the only two fisheries in the African region undergoing comprehensive FIPs. The Gambian sole fishery is a unique and very interesting FIP case considering the type of participants, governance structure and the various improvements the fishery has undergone since 2008, after its first MSC pre-assessment in 2007. Unlike most other FIP management structures, the Sole fishery has a separate and independent co-management body with the lead organization being the National Sole Fishery Co-Management Committee (NASCOM), amongst other stakeholders such as government departments, industry (Atlantic Seafood Company Ltd) and its basket of supporting partners and international research institutions.

They are all engaged in ensuring the fishery meets sustainability standards to possibly re-apply for MSC certification, with this goal driven in part by the demand for sole in the international (mainly EU) market (multiple interviews).

However, actor motivations are multiple and varied. The Gambians are interested in making their fishery more sustainable and strive to garner the benefits of being certified; the local industry is interested in having the eco-label to promote and sell more product in the international market; and most other international actors are interested in improving the fishery towards sustainability while addressing food security issues in the Gambia.



Figure 4: The map of the Gambia showing its various fishing areas. Retrieved from Gambia -Senegal Sustainable Fishery Project USAID/BaNafaa, Year 4 Annual Report (Fiscal Year 2013)

Through *Ba Nafaa*, improvements in the fishery took a new turn in 2008 after they failed to pass the MSC pre-assessment, which was supported at the time by the Gambian government and GAMFIDA. Later, between 2009 to 2010 and with similar support from the University of Rhode Island, the fishery went into a full FIP process and a work plan was developed for execution by all participating parties. As FIP guidelines are generally set to meet standards set by the MSC, the fishery went through another MSC-pre-assessment in 2015 yet failed again (fisheryprogress.org. 2018). Despite such frustration, NASCOM, and its promoters used the findings and recommendations of the 2015 pre-assessment, along with various other supports, to launch a comprehensive FIP using CASS guidelines. This FIP is set to run up to 2022 with specific internal evaluation timeframes to achieve their ultimate objectives (sustainability and certification). An interesting component of this FIP is the power given to the co-management body (NASCOM) which involves various stakeholders and where the government representative is not considered the leader. Based on the literature review above, it is quite unusual for the government to make provisions in its fishery policies for a separate management institution as has been noted by an interviewee. Despite government's capacity weaknesses, the various actors participating in the FIP are optimistic and steadfast in achieving the MSC blue eco-label for the Gambian Sole.

5.2 Findings/Analysis

5.2.1 Motivation and Stakeholders Involvement

The unique and pro-active co-management structure of fishery governance in the Gambia has gone a long way to promote multi-stakeholder involvement. It has resulted in various

joint efforts that seek to enhance the sustainability of the Sole fishery. Before the creation of NASCOM, local fishery associations such as GAMFIDA had been present in the country and seeking to ensure the sole fishery's sustainability and possibly increase its competitiveness in the international market. They are now seeking the MSC eco-label by mobilizing member resources and with support from the government. Though efforts towards achieving this MSC label have been quite challenging for the fishery, there is evidence of a participatory approach in the management and activities within this fishery whereby both state and private actors participate. They each represent and have their own unique motivations, roles, and expectations to be realized from their participation in the FIP, but according to one participant in this study, share a common set of goals: for the 'sole fishery [to] access the international market, sustainable conservation, and management, including social, economic, biological, and ecological components' (Interview no.9).

The Gambian Sole FIP has as principal actors NASCOM, DoFish, the Atlantic Seafood Company Ltd and several donor organizations, NGOs and international seafood industries (fisheryprogress.org). One of the interviewees outlined additional stakeholders involved in the FIP activities including: '... fishermen, women fish workers (smokers, dryers, and traders), the association of Gambia fishing companies, department of fisheries, the Ministry of Fisheries, Department of Parks and Wildlife Management, National Environment Agency (NEA), Department of Forestry and local government authorities' (Interview no. 8). As previously mentioned, improvements had earlier begun for the sole fishery through local institutional support from the people themselves, which later attracted international

organizations to support their activities. As a participant from one of the donor organizations posited:

‘So, we went and talked to people in the fishery and they told us they were interested in the sole fishery which had had a pre-assessment done and they didn’t pass, and they were still interested in doing it ... So, there were 12 points in it and we said “okay let’s start working on those points and see if we can address the weaknesses and concerns and get it up to a score where eventually they can do an assessment and hopefully get the MSC certification”’ (Interview no. 3).

Congruently, referring to the motivation of the people themselves to ensure improvements in their fishery, a similar participant from a donor organization made the assertion:

‘So, when the URI USAID-led project came in in 2009, we found these initiatives staling, so the project was able to support this initiative that was already installed, so the project was able to [build] enough support for this initiative that was already initiated by the government and other actors ... So, we weren’t on the ground working with them at that time. That means that basically, there is totally the stakeholders, the fishermen and we think it is the fishermen themselves wanting to do these and make the impact’ (Interview no. 4).

This statement shows how interested the people were in the process as well as the origins of their involvement. In this case, the Gambians showed significant interest in improving their fishery before the MSC process began, which appears to be somewhat unusual or uncommon for an African fishery based on the review of the literature above.

To date, the Gambia has one sole seafood buyer (Atlantic Seafood Limited through Network Seafood⁸) that processes and exports the fish to Europe and other international

⁸ The Atlantic Seafood Limited has been the only private company in the Gambia processing and exporting sole fish. Their role in the MSC-pre-assessment was at the level of providing useful data for the fishery that assisted in various stock and other assessments.

markets through their main company branch in the Netherlands. This fishery has an average annual harvest of roughly 1,559 Metric Tonnes (Gambia DOF, 2006) but there are sustainability concerns. As an industry participant explained: ‘But then your interest is the sustainability, fish is fast declining, before I was doing 10 tons but now if I have 4 tons I am happy’ (Interview no.2). This statement typically supports the usual arguments for the need to promote improvements for the sustainability of fisheries.

But industry motivation and interest in the FIP is not only to make sure the fishery is sustainable in the long run, but also to garner the benefit every fishery seeks to get when they become eco-certified in the international market. A participant explained:

‘we got to the project because we wanted to get the eco-labeled product and that is why we joined the project. Atlantic Seafood need ecolabel product, we have 90% of the Sole is processed by AS, so the project had to pass through AS to know the production. So, our main aim is to get the ecolabel to sell our fish and to participate in good management fishing (sustainable fishing) so [that] is our main reason’ (Interview no. 2).

Unlike most other FIPs in Africa, which are predominantly NGO led, the Gambian sole case appears more locally integrated with the NASCOM leading most of the activities. Stakeholders, through the agreed MOU, know what specifically their tasks are in the process. There has been notable stakeholder involvement in the process although with different levels of engagement amongst them as one participant explained:

‘... Well, we work with DoFish, and the fishermen associations and the fishery processing industry – Atlantic Seafood ... And so, through the approach URI uses very often, participatory stakeholder-driven process, doing research and engaging all stakeholders from the fishermen at landing sites up to the national level. So, through those approaches and processes, we were able over 5 years to facilitate the process’ (Interview no. 4).

The Gambia FIP was driven by a complex mix of international and local actors and interests. Despite the presence of external partners and the key role of external market forces, provisions were made in the Gambia FIP work plan for participating local actors to have specific and meaningful roles in the process. Although most of the improvement initiatives were initiated by the researchers from URI, local actors still had their roles, as pointed out by a study participant: ‘The project was coordinated by URI from the US and it was them who initiated the project then NASCOM and DoFish’ (Interview no. 2). It is worth noting that this USAID-led project had WWF as the coordinating partner and an ex-officio representative from WWF made clear his/her interest in the process by stating:

‘When I do conservation there I do some biological aspect and socioeconomic aspects and other issues like national park management there. And the main issue was to help women to stop all the juvenile fishing activities’ (Interview no. 1).

Aside from these international partners supporting the FIP, specific activities undertaken by the FIP are coordinated with each person being assigned specific roles and functions, ranging from providing fish stock data (Atlantic Seafood) to coordinating activities at landing sites. As one participant explained:

‘So, you have the government, the ministry and the department of fisheries, and at the landing sites, they have government agents that are from the department of fisheries. And then we had on the ground...the various associations of fishermen. So, we had NAFO, GAMFIDA’ (Interview no. 4).

This kind of participatory approach generally helped decision-making at the FIP table and facilitated a sense of belonging and self-pride within the whole process as noted by one interviewee: ‘And that’s where stakeholders really go to fill the ownership over the decision

making and what was happening because they were part of the knowledge and information that was going into it' (Interview no. 4).

Though USAID assisted immensely in the initial conceptualization of these FIP activities based on the guideline and activities that were already completed with GAMFIDA having undertaken an MSC pre-assessment of the fishery, their principal motivation for selecting the Gambia, as a participant explained, was:

‘The USAID standpoint, they were interested in biodiversity protection, food security, and economic growth. And sustainably managing the fishery is important for biodiversity conservation and also for the general economic development of the country... (Interview no. 3).

But with such motivation from this external partner and with adequate financial strength, there was some degree of openness and transparency in their involvement, which speaks to their overall objectives to help the people and make their fishery sustainable.

With regards to the URI team, through the *Ba Nafaa* project, the team decided to work on strengthening the scientific and technological competences and knowledge-base of the people. As a participant mentioned: ‘For URI project it was to show them better fishing activities and how to do sustainable fishing, so they work on that, on best fishing time, resting and non-resting periods...’ (Interview no. 1). In terms of interactions between the government and the locals, the same participant explained the nature of communication and decision-making:

‘...we inform government, we make agreements on how the project will work. And in our activities, the field person will help us implement. For the

association, we just talk together and do a PRA and know their interest and major expectation and work with them' (Interview no. 1).

Similarly, another participant explained how it was possible to effectively delegate tasks amongst the members and then explained the approach they used: 'Okay through a stakeholder workshop, we facilitated the process to develop a management plan and a lot of the research was also action research, so a lot of the processing company and the guys will use fishermen to collect data' (Interview no. 3).

Although coordination and delegation of specific roles were done largely by URI, a participant alluded to the need for fishers and industry representatives to get more involved in the process. The participant said:

'I believe [if] the fishermen and the fishing industry over there do not participate financially it won't be reasonable. So there is a need for them, too, to invest in it and show their interest and not only from the government, not [just] URI. So, it will be good if the certification interest comes from fishermen and industry' (Interview no. 1).

This externally supported initiative reinvigorated the overall FIP process, but the motivation and willingness from the people have been a key strength underpinning the success of these fishery's improvements so far. The people did not just wait for external partners to come in and decide on what they should do. This specific aspect was emphasized by a participant who said:

'Again the Gambia and as I open up and started talking with you. At least people came to us and ask us for help and told us "this is what we wanna do. Can you help us?" So they kind of already know what to do, unlike other places where institutions like the World Bank comes in and ask them to do what they didn't want to do it (Interview no. 3).

Foley (2013) raises the question of the kind of interactions that do exist between local or

national authorities and with other private authorities. The Gambian Sole FIP shows evidence of a mutual and all-inclusive governance process with participating actors having their fair share of control over and say in the process, while also ensuring national authorities are given their rightful place.

Generally, the market demand for the sole fishery, especially in Europe and other international markets, is a critically important driver for the improvement of the sole fishery in the Gambia. Major international seafood giants such as Kaufland are supporting the FIP process and are helping the fishery work towards obtaining the eco-label because it is good for business. Supporting the Gambian sole to have the MSC eco-label is a very important business decision because it will help to improve Kaufland's market share and increase demand for its products. An industry participant explained:

‘Yes, because Kaufland Seafood Company, South Africa Fish exporters and IDEKA International have shown interest in the Gambian sole should an ecolabel be obtained in the future. So Kaufland was able to raise one hundred thousand Euro to support the implementation of the Sole management plan’.
(Interview no. 9)

Overall, the presence and interest of these international seafood firms, NGOs, government, researchers, donor organizations and the locals have made the Gambian Sole FIP a unique and interesting FIP case from the African region. The case represents the emergence of transnational environmental governance influenced by a political economy of interactions and collaborative relationships, and where different actors bring different resources to, and exercise different degrees of power at, the collaborative FIP table.

Table 5 shows a summary of participating actors and their roles in the Gambian Sole FIP.

Table 5: List of participating actors and their roles in the Gambian FIP

Name of Actor	Type of Actor	Role(s) in the FIP	Actors Motivation
NASCOM	Sole fishery Co-management structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FIP leads and coordinates • Lobbying for support • Implementation and follow up of the work plan and improvement plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To see improvements to the fishery, its sustainability and meeting standards to certification set by the MSC
Department of Fisheries (DoF)	Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide administrative support • Participate in work plan development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General improvement of the fishery to better serve the people of the Gambia and their livelihood
GAMFIDA	Fishery Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated the first MSC pre-assessment • Initiated improvement activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking improvements and possibly MSC certification
Atlantic	Industry/processor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To see the

Seafood Company Limited		providing useful data for the fishery	Sole fishery attain the ecolabel and garner more market access internationally
USAID <i>Ba Nafaa</i> Project	International Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides financial support • Help develop a FIP work plan with other stakeholders • Carrying our scientific research on the fishery • Organise meetings with other stakeholders • Assisted in the second MSC pre-assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help address food security and better livelihood issues • See the fishery get improved towards sustainability and better stock conservation • Help the fishery get the MSC ecolabel
MSC	International NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in lobbying for support for the fisheries activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the Gambian Sole to finally get eco-certified
Kaufland	Seafood Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support

Company		support for improvements and pre-assessment	improvement initiatives and pre-assessments
Rockefeller Foundation	Grant/Donor Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance for activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improvement initiatives
WWF/IUCN	International NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and scientific support and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support training and improvement

5.2.2 Financing

The Gambian sole fishery FIP has benefited over the years from numerous funding sources, including funding from the government, local fishing associations, NGOs, international development organizations, international fishing industries and donor countries. Although they all have varying objectives and motivations as section 5.2.1 outlines, their ultimate and collective goal is to improve fishery sustainability while improving international market access and the livelihood of the people. Local stakeholders have been very committed to these fishery improvement efforts by funding the first ever pre-assessment in 2007 by GAMFIDA, with support from the government and the MSC. An interviewee noted:

‘oh you mean the MSC pre-assessment that cost like \$30,000? So, for the first one that was done before URI came in 2008 and that was GAMFIDA that initiated that with the MSC, and that was funded by the MSC to fund that pre-assessment’. (Interview no. 4).

It is worth noting that the MSC usually does not normally fund or carry out pre-assessments, but the Gambian sole case was viewed as a type pilot project for the region and as such received support from the MSC. With a strong push from local people for the project, the effort then attracted and received support from other major donor organizations. Notwithstanding the failure of the MSC pre-assessment in 2007, there remained a need for fishery improvements in the Gambia. Through sustained donor interest, the US regional mission for the Gambia identified the sole fishery as the beneficiary of a USAID project for West Africa. As a participant explained:

‘So, we had an umbrella award from USAID and Sustainable Coastal Communities and Ecosystem and the US regional mission in the country, so they were interested in working in West Africa and you know we have been working in Senegal, Gambia, and Ghana’ (Interview no. 3).

This USAID-led project was coordinated through the WWF regional office for the Gambia and Senegal. This was supplemented with other funding coordinated by WWF that targeting specific fishing activities as outlined by an official from WWF:

‘we had funds from USAID, and URI for this NASCOM and Sole fishery. For the women, we had a basket of funding like a foundation in Switzerland, MAVVA, which belong to a drug company and they are the main sponsor of WWF and IUCN for a long time and they constitute a Dutch and Spanish fund, and the project was to help the women’ (Interview no. 1).

The Atlantic Seafood company provided human resources in terms of providing staff to assist in data collection or attending to researchers when they visited the factory and

requested information within the reach of the company. Their role was vital in supporting the directions in which improvements could realistically be done, largely through the provision of data. An official from the industry made this assertion: ‘Nope we don’t put cash. We just provided human resources and information or to talk to fishers and we give their contact, so we give mostly human support and data they need for their activity’ (Interview no. 2). Another industry participant agreed with this and said: ‘No there was no money, it was from MSC themselves. And we gave just data and nothing else’. (Interview no. 6)

Government for its part, though very supportive, was challenged like most other governments in Africa in terms of the amount of support they could provide for such initiatives, and as such relied on donor support as noted by a participant: ‘And there is no way the small-scale or even the Gambian government could do all of that if not of donor assistance to achieve all that’ (Interview no. 3). But NASCOM, a co-management structure created to lead activities for the fishery through assistance from the USAID-led project, was very proactive in sourcing funding to support activities as evidenced by the example below provided by an interview participant: ‘Funding support was solicited by NASCOM through the University of Rhode Island’s Coastal Resources Center (URI/CRC) to implement the management plan and deficiencies identified in 2015’ (Interview no. 9). In 2015, they received support from a major seafood company (Kaufland), amongst other supports, to fund the second MSC pre-assessment as a participant explained:

‘... and the last one by Kaufland seafood in Germany. They gave \$50,000 and a patrol boat to do the pre-assessment. So, the Kaufland grants, USAID grant

and other money we fundraised through Rockefeller and MSC recently' (Interview no. 3).

So, neither NASCOM, the government nor the industry provided direct funding to support the second pre-assessment, but through better lobbying and interest from external partners, NASCOM was able to solicit and receive other grants. As a participant said: 'We have had more small support to them through kind of a FIP grant and Rockefeller foundation grant for small-scale levels' (Interview no. 3). NASCOM thus have been able to carry out and accomplish major tasks and challenges through accumulating multiple sources of funding.

In the case of the Gambia, although government participation was not as insignificant as it has been in most other African FIPs, it nevertheless faced challenges as noted below: 'Is not like they are not behind in terms of what they want to go in term if their policy, they are just limited in both their human and financial resources given to them by their government to manage' (Interview no.3). Despite the lack of direct funding from government sources, the government worked closely with NASCOM to bring in funding that could support FIP activities as another participant explained:

'the new government now from the old one are very, very engaged now, their commitment to this kind of activity and this kind of resource management governance team I think is very strong. They are in the process of negotiating a World Bank regional fishery project funding and that's gonna go directly to government entities from the World Bank, so they were already committing some of these resources to support the FIP as far as I know...' (Interview no. 4).

5.2.3 Governance Structure and Policy Processes

Given the deep interactions among different types of actors and organizations, the Gambian sole fishery FIP initiative can be considered a case of transnational hybrid governance as defined by scholars working in this field (see for example Foley, 2017; Ponte, 2012; Bonanno & Constance, 2008). The Gambian FIP involved the participation of a broad range of actors from private non-state actors, the public, and NGOs interacting together within a policy development process. This FIP effort also saw many challenges related to power differences, competing interests, and ultimately, who had most control or influence over decision-making. Though various scholars such as Vogel (2010), Gulbrandsen (2009) and Auld et al. (2009) emphasize the shift in management systems from public to private management realms, especially for certification related initiatives, the Gambian FIP suggests there is an ongoing role for the state in emerging hybrid public-private, state-non-state interactions that cross international borders.

The Gambia Fishery Act in 2007 made provisions for a co-management structure in which power was delegated to the NASCOM with a specific mandate that would see it collaborate with government departments. A participant explained:

‘There was a visionary language in the Gambian fishery law revision of 2007 which said that the government (DoFish) had the authority to grant use right for special management areas. So, you know that was something very unique in Africa that the law had some enabling language for co-management and use rights in fisheries. So that was there as of 2007’ (Interview no. 4).

In this instance, power was delegated to NASCOM which had the right to make decisions or to co-develop policies regarding management. For instance, NASCOM had the right to close the fishery as noted by an interview participant:

‘To me a big deal there also was how Gambia had a very interesting legislation that allowed for use rights to be granted and there were very few places in Africa where the fisheries legislation basically allows for the granting of use rights. So, the use rights to the sole artisanal fisheries up to 9 nautical miles to sea was given to NASCOM and is a group use right. So, they have the right to harvest and manage that fishery granted and sign off by the minister within the management plan’ (Interview no. 3).

Although NASCOM had authority to make decisions, like any other local institutions in Africa, it was also challenged with financial and human capacity, capability and internal human dynamic issues. For instance, a participant raised concerns about NASCOM membership composition and how members interacted with external partners. This participant noted: ‘they spoke only with some leaders, not all, but they need to go deep, also NASCOM, 80% of them are not fishers. So as of now, they don’t really involve fishers’ (Interview no. 1). Such challenges prompted external funders to develop and deliver capacity building workshops and training sessions to ensure that the FIP had a strategic management plan guiding their efforts as noted below:

‘Okay through a stakeholder workshop, we facilitated the process to develop a management plan and a lot of the research was also action research ... Then we proceeded to develop ... and organize the NASCOM, and that was a multi-stakeholder committee, that constituted the industry, the fishermen from the 12 landing sites, DoFISH, and a few other people and I think that the composition can be seen in the management plan that is also online’ (Interview no. 3).

As the statement above illustrates, the composition of NASCOM included relevant stakeholders but not only fishers. The decision-making processes was interactive and

participatory as NASCOM depended on the existing LASCOM (Local Association of Sole Co-Management) for information before any preliminary decisions could be taken or made. As another participant outlined: ‘So NASCOM gathered info from LASCOM, so the NASCOM had LACOM members, so they say we want to close for 6 months since they gather that from their local knowledge and we want to make that closure for 1 nautical mile’ (Interview no. 5). This quote illustrates how the people at the local levels through LASCOM had the power to make important decisions such as closure periods.

As some scholars have posited (Foley, 2017; Hatanaka & Busch, 2008), management and control of such processes are always being influenced within a hybridized network system involving interactions between private actors and existing government institutions. This is congruent with the statement made by one of the NGOs officials who explained the way decisions are made:

‘For this main basket program, WWF decided all. From my own funding, I make my program and every end of the year, I write my report and then I am audited. So I make all decision. But for NASCOM, URI was really involved in the decision making, 60-70% of the decision will come from URI who made most of the research and other decisions’ (Interview no. 1).

A number of participants made comments about the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement in the FIP process. For instance, one participant raised the issue of proper stakeholder involvement in the overall process. Participating actors were given a place in any of the FIP development activities and decision-making process as the participant outlines:

‘So, the stakeholder groups were the ones that will set the management objectives and decide all the options you can do for management and which

ones they will implement and then we worked with them and made suggestions all the way. We didn't make decisions for them, they made their own decisions especially the composition and make up of the NASCOM' (Interview no. 3).

Similarly, another participant positively described the participation of stakeholders as bottom-up versus a top-down management approach and made the following assertion:

'I think the main thing the URI brought was the approach you know, making sure there was a participatory approach, that really engaged the fishermen and civil society actors, along side the government and gave them a place at the decision-making table but not just gave them a place but we did a lot of activities with the fishermen like doing action research, doing studies on local knowledge, and then doing some scientific research and putting it all together with the local knowledge to understand what was known about the fishery' (Interview no. 4)

Stakeholders generally participated in the process, as a participant noted,: '... through a multi-stakeholder approach including fishermen, women fish processors and trader, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, etc' (Interview no. 9). Indeed, most of the FIP decisions made had to go through all stakeholders for validation especially in terms of the sole fishery management plan as another participant mentioned: 'So after 2 years, it already had resulted to sort of a sole management plan and Oyster plan, that was approved by all the stakeholders and that had a significant stuff in it like delegating use rights to co-management entities' (Interview no. 4).

Although NASCOM (led the FIP process) was proactive in the FIP processes, the government through its related participating departments also had their own roles to play as per the agreed MOU guiding the FIP. However, in keeping with observations made by Allison & Horemans (2006), who have noted how governments are often very reluctant to

participate meaningfully in such hybrid processes, the Gambian government departments, although active in some stages as noted above, were relatively passive when present at FIP meetings as the following participant noted:

‘the government just sat down and watched everything and did nothing. I mean we once met with the minister and secretary. They were just watching and did nothing; the president stays out which was good. The DoFISH just came and watch and learn’. (Interview no. 5)

The follow up of various regulations by the government will definitely assist in the process as an industry participant posited. There is a need for the control of fishing boats and fishermen from Senegal as part of efforts to curb the current waves of uncontrolled overfishing in the Gambia. Also, the support of the local industry through feasible policies will go along way not only to benefit the industry but also Gambians through better tax returns amongst other relevant issues such as government staff proactiveness. The industry participant said:

‘So even the factory is doing better then they will employ more people and more tax, get more fish. So, the government should really be serious and get involved in the management... So it is all about the mentality, sensitization and not look at the money...So it is all about the mentality and the people. So, the main focus is the people’s will’ (Interview no. 2).

Despite such passivity in some regards, the government did contribute in areas where it had competency and capacity to offer. Indeed, they did most of their activities as agreed upon in the work plan as the following participant recounts: ‘... Supporting the communities in good fishing practice such as good fishing hygiene; creating the conducive environment for the communities, building ice plants and cool storage; providing weather forecast information to communities’ (interview no. 7).

5.2.4 Capacity Enhancement

Among numerous challenges facing most FIPs in Africa, the lack of capacity and capabilities remains a major and crucial factor that limits progress for fisheries engaged within FIP-related activities. As noted by Andrew *et al.* (2007) capacity-building is necessary for fisheries to improve in developing countries which are mostly small-scale, traditional or artisanal in nature. Most African fisheries currently depend to some extent on rudimentary techniques or technologies for fish exploitation and processing compared to large-scale and more industrialized fishing countries. As the case with many other developing countries fisheries (See Hall *et al.*, 2013; Bunce *et al.*, 2008), high illiteracy levels also exist amongst the Gambian fishers. Many in the fishery have hardly had any formal education or training on how to carry out professional fishing (and this impacts their ability to participate effectively in fisheries evolving towards sustainability, especially given that such change processes tend to require technical knowledge).

As articulated by one participant, the majority of stakeholders participating in the sole FIP, including those representing government departments, industry, local fishery associations, as well as the fishers themselves, all need some degree of training or formal education if they are to more effectively engage with the fishery improvement process:

‘So DoFish is very weak and the other thing we made sure was the educational component like lets talk about leadership. What does leadership means, co-management and the last thing was what knowledge do we have about the fishery and what’s happening. Basically the only knowledge’s they had was local knowledge [...] We then took a 3 prong approach, we had to improve capacities of the people of the country...we were there for 5 years because we wanted it to continue and most of the staffs had poor knowledge. The data

collectors had to create their own ways to get to the beaches and there was one computer and he was one guy there, who left' (Interview no. 5).

This participant statement clearly shows how almost all participants are experiencing a type of capacity gap. People need to be trained and time is needed to do this. The *Ba Nafaa* project took up to three years to build the people's capacity, especially within the department of fisheries, to handle issues related to stock assessment and how to better structure and coordinate the co-managed system (CRC-URI, 2014). It also faced tight budget challenges. Despite these limitations, this URI-led project effectively strategized on how training could be done in a manner that trickled down to every participant. As the following interviewee mentioned:

'there where operating principles, like URI, will facilitate the participatory process and the fact that the capacity building should only be on the government site. But we have to make sure that all the actors down the chain from national levels down to the fishermen all need to benefit from the capacity building and the processes' (Interview no. 4).

With a training plan that cut across all the relevant participants, the FIP was able to move forward on important project components such as data collection, stock management, and governance or leadership development. Notwithstanding these efforts, the sustainability of these training efforts was an issue raised by one of the participants who made the following assertion: '... we really have to be careful of the needs and priorities like those in the fishery department and some junior staffs etc. So, the government must sign a letter saying they are going to be employed when they get back, so we are sure they are going back to assist to have more focus training from workshops and it has to be sustained over a long period of time' (Interview no. 3). Such a situation and thinking always arise within many projects

in Africa, where people are trained and later abandon the position due to one or several reasons, thus creating more capacity needs that obstruct the smooth functioning of these improvement processes especially if the person had a very vital role in the process.

The capacity needs for most FIP-related activities mostly focused on data collection, especially at landing sites, stock assessment, data collation, and data management., creating jobs either by local firms or government and the overall management and leadership skills of the stakeholders. A co-managed system of fisheries governance, as in the case of the Gambian FIP, needs significant training in areas related to data given the nature of the field. Another area of capacity development propriety relates to decision-making. Specifically, it is important that participants understand how to properly work collaboratively such that conflict can be avoided. As a participant said:

‘But there is a lot to be done in terms of the institutions, the structures, and the capabilities and you have to build all that. We are willing to share power with the fishing industry and give them more respect in what they are doing, particularly in terms of decisions rather than government people trying to say the fishermen are uneducated, but the fishermen know a lot in what they do’ (Interview no. 3).

This perspective supports the need for the proper capacity building if the FIP is to operate effectively. Participants also need a adequate understanding of the various institutions involved, the actors’ differing roles, and how decisions are being and will be made. For example, a researcher participant said: ‘we did some [research] capacity on how they can do a stock assessment which they weren’t doing before...’ (Interview no. 3).

Another participant mentioned how learning from the experiences of neighboring countries could be of interest and importance. The participant said: ‘So, Gambia can still have support

from Senegal not only from those abroad through the transfer of technology from a neighbor. Another thing is fish stock and information management or statistics since they don't do any research...at the level of the government' (Interview no. 2).

It is worth noting that investing in capacity building within the sole FIP process was seen as high priority. The various donor organizations and NGOs involved invested resources to help ensure participants had the abilities needed to ensure the sustainability of the project, especially when the funding stops. These capacity-building efforts were seen as investments in the future, and as a way of reducing project costs in the long run as noted by the following participant:

‘So, it will be nice if the capacity is there to reduce the cost in the future through upfront investment in building the institutional structures and the human resources and capacities and that can carry out quite a bit’ (Interview no. 3).

5.3 Challenges of the Gambian FIP

The Gambian sole FIP, despite its accomplishments thus far, is still challenged with many issues. If such issues were addressed, better outcomes would likely result. Generally, low literacy rates and weak capacity infrastructures remain key human resources constraints that plague the development of these fisheries. As Wakamatsu & Wakamatsu (2007) noted, a proper understanding of the certification guidelines is very difficult for small-scale fisheries like those in the Gambia owing to lack of expertise. However, other challenges that seriously affect the smooth running of the FIP also exist.

First, there is inadequate work done by officials to integrate communities in the FIP. Fishing communities need to be properly informed and encouraged to participate in all aspects of such processes. Sensitizing community members for either short or long-term involvement is also very important. Helping them to understand how they can influence the process to bring about fishery sustainability is critical. This attention to community participation was described as lacking by one of the participants in the Gambian FIP:

‘... one is to have good sensitization on how to stop it and enforce the law. And then some bad practices like nets bycatch. The main issue is the juvenile fishing and organize fishing space [...] I say one drawback with URI, they spoke only with some leaders, not all, but they need to go deep, also NASCOM 80% of them are not fishers. So as of now, they don't really involve fishers’ (Interview no. 1).

Most importantly, the small-scale fishers who are the principal producers who are most affected by, or supposed beneficiaries of, improvements are generally simply represented by a few leaders. So, this lack of deep engagement is really a key issue as another participant emphasized again: ‘Lack of sensitization on good fishing practice to the communities and the use of the wrong fishing net and gears’ (Interview no. 7).

Secondly, the whole process towards obtaining the MSC eco-label is very challenging for small-scale fisheries despite the level of improvements completed through MSC pre-assessments and FIPs. Since 2007, the Gambian sole fishery went through multiple stakeholder involvement efforts. It has undergone two MSC pre-assessments with numerous financial investments yet have failed to meet the sustainability standards. The inability to meet the standard seems to have gone a long way to frustrate many of the participants involved, especially when they came so close in earlier efforts. Due to the

frustration related to not being able to achieve the MSC certification and label, participants in the FIP, including some donors, researchers and even industry representatives, appear to have lost some of their initial motivation for participation in the FIP. One of the participants made the following assertion to this:

‘Yeah, it is challenging because the MSC standards are basically benchmark to the industrial fishery and Western nations-type capacity, so it’s very very challenging and you know for the Gambia the main challenges are that of meeting the data standards and stock assessment standards’ (Interview no. 4).

In addition to frustration about failing to meet the MSC standard, there has also been some frustration related to funding and particularly on the declining funding for the FIP. Funding remains a major challenge for these fisheries. A lack of progress at the FIP level appears to discourage funders. When external funding keeps dropping frustrations arise and this can affect motivation and ultimately outcomes:

‘So I think another challenge in this small-scale developing countries fisheries is not only the assessment expenses but also to get it and all the things you need to do. And if you don’t pass, all the improvements cost money too which can be more expensive than the assessment itself without donor support in all these initiatives. I think small-scale fisheries don’t really stand a chance to do all these and many countries too. The industry is quite diverse and they don’t have one strong association and financial resources or organizational capacity necessary to do this kind of things’ (Interview no.3).

An additional challenge in the Gambian context relates to the inaccessibility of training institutions. The Gambia has just a handful of training centers. Aside from the University of the Gambia, there are no other training facilities. Many FIP participants had to receive training in countries outside of the Gambia. Given the associated cost of such training, only some people could receive the training they needed. This was expensive. The few lucky

ones who did get trained still do not have the capacity to adequately handle all the activities or tasks coming to them. This human resource capacity gap was noted by several participants, with a representative quote below:

‘Okay what I know, the first thing is about the human resource, especially for the Gambia. Not enough expertise in the fishery by those in the fisheries department, some countries have schools for training, but the Gambia doesn’t. Very few experts, which at times they are not there when you need them especially when they are on leave. But I know the project trains people in the US and some training, but you know you even those trained are not having any base in fishery so is not relevant’ (Interview no 2).

The unavailability of experts capable of handling stock assessment or data collection, especially at critical periods, was a major limitation for the FIP in the Gambia. Thus, the FIP project’s objective to conduct a scientific assessment of the fishery’s sustainability failed as a result of poor data availability. The challenges of having to work with poor surveillance systems and with a lack of fishery patrol boats were additional limitations. To help address capacity challenges, NASCOM, as the principal FIP lead, provided volunteer staff, although the fact that they were temporary volunteers seems to have impacted their commitment to the tasks allotted to them. Although volunteer and temporary staff brought goodwill to their efforts, goodwill was not enough to bring about the desired outcomes as noted below:

‘The other thing I will like to say is what most outsiders don’t realise about an organization like NASCOM. Like any NGO, who has permanent staffs that are salaried, NASCOM staffs basically are volunteering. So, it is not like they are getting salaries to work full time in their capacity as NASCOM. So, for me, it is very understandable [that] they are not functioning like NGO with 5 or more staffs that have salaries’ (Interview no. 4).

In addition to the volunteer staff limitations at NASCOM, many participants also noted how NASCOM only functions when researchers from URI were present. Their presence at meetings was not constant, as was the case with government representatives. Over time attendance at meetings more generally dropped. This caused lapses in proper follow-on planned activities as noted below:

‘... Next is follow up of the project. As it starts many people are interested and soon they stop. Even if you call a meeting people don’t come compared to when the project began [...] you know everyone has his own responsibility and diverse role. We only see NASCOM when URI came. So, we think the interaction is different, NASCOM should not only wait on URI for the meeting. So normally we should have our own meeting without URI and not only wait on when URI come’ (Interview no. 2).

Another key challenge experienced relates to the political will and involvement of government in the whole process. As noted, the lack of available expertise and financial resources from government limited success. Failures in meeting the MSC standard has been attributed to government lapses in setting up good stock assessment systems and developing good legislation that would regulate fishing zones and ensure effectively the enforcement of legislation as noted below: ‘In my sight, I don’t know exactly but I think we [are] not getting enough from the fishery department, and also we don’t have enough results to meet the MSC standard for the label. They don’t give because we don’t have result’ (Interview no. 2).

The Gambian Sole FIP is an interesting case amongst the FIPs in developing countries and Africa in particular. Local fishery associations are principal drivers of improvement initiatives and complimented with support from international agencies and NGOs. Fishers

participation and that of the local government in the FIP process is limited but recognizable. Through the co-management structure for the fishery, particularly through the role of NASCOM, the government has their position in the governance of the fishery, though many of the support and improvement initiatives are coordinated by the participating actors. The fishery has received several international supports from NGOs, seafood industry giants and the MSC itself and is currently working to meet certification standards and one day achieve the MSC eco-label. The Gambia sole fishery FIP thus is characterized by a mix of international and local actors and interests, enabled in particular by relatively well-organized local interests and a co-management structure (NASCOM). The new environmental governance intervention, FIP, thus was made possible by an already existing social and institutional context conducive to facilitating the largely externally-driven governance interventions.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusions

Over recent decades, there has been a trend to enhance the sustainable and efficient management of wild-caught fisheries globally while still encouraging its competitiveness at the international scale. This has been achieved to some extent through pressures and supports from promoters of various eco-certification schemes, with the MSC blue-ecolabel as the most well-recognized certification standard-setter. But owing to the numerous drawbacks of the MSC (such as the certification costs, and very difficult assessment criteria amongst others), and through multi-stakeholder consultations and agreements, FIPs were introduced in late 2010 under the umbrella of the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions (CASS). These FIPs encourage a multi-stakeholder approach as a means to improve the management of fisheries as they move towards sustainability and where possible, they can also seek to raise their standards in preparation for full assessments for MSC certification.

When effective, FIPs create changes in the governance systems of fisheries, especially when there is the involvement of multiple actors and agents within the FIP processes. Conceptualizing the case of African FIPs, this thesis draws its motivation from an interest in understanding the current shift of fishery governance approaches from a more state-centric system to a transnational and often non-state driven multi-stakeholder approach. The popularity of FIPs as a governance approach is based on the various expected benefits a fishery might gain from the process, especially within the international market. Thus, this

simple fact alone is a huge motivating factor for most of the actors participating in this improvement approach.

The plethora of actors - such as state authorities, industries, fishers and numerous private authorities and NGOs - within FIPs processes in Africa has been the principal point of attention for this thesis, including an analysis of the various motivations of the stakeholders, their commitments (especially financial resources), their interactions and collaborative behaviour in facilitating improvements for these fisheries. Through in-depth analysis as discussed in chapter 4 and 5, the thesis identified various motivations for participation, including the drive for proper fish stock conservation, sustainability and access of these fisheries to the international market. Relatedly, almost all African FIPs are dependent on external funding sources from donor organizations and NGOs, who are in most cases leading these improvement initiatives. Governments are often weak and seldom financially involved in such FIP processes. With such an internationally led approach for most FIPs in Africa, we are tempted to question the type of interaction that does exist between these actors, especially with histories of external colonialism and exploitation on the continent. But as the discussion outlines, a collaborative and amicable interaction between most actors involved with fishery decision-making and policy formulation processes is possible through FIPs. There is, to some extent, a high degree of stakeholder involvement, especially during the development of FIP work plans. The fishers and their communities on their part though are challenged in participation, partly due to low literacy rates but also because of a lack of expertise and infrastructure. Despite these limitations, some fishers' representatives become very active in their FIP as was the case of the Gambian Sole fishery.

The issue of sensitization of these FIP initiatives amongst fishers, communities and even the governments remain a problem for most of these FIPs. The FIP guidelines, as a participant mentioned, are very technical and not written in plain language. Thus, interacting and dealing with small-scale fishers who have very little or no formal education always challenged the FIP. In some cases, FIPs did not involve the actual fishers but just a few educated elites of the region. The lack of inclusion of non-fishing/fishery experts in some FIP processes definitely created an imbalance in the type of policies or decisions that were taken and the actual challenges that were addressed. Also, the enthusiasm of these participants was observed to decline over time from when the FIP was actually launched to its implementation phases, especially when the funders left the process or terminated their funding contributions.

Governments were generally proactive in developing legislation and policies supportive of improvements, but the enforcement mechanisms for these legislations are very porous and weak, thus making it a big issue for these fisheries. Governments are in most cases limited in expertise or infrastructure to effectively manage their fisheries, which hinders greatly the consolidation of improvement initiatives made possible through FIPs. In the Gambian case, the financial commitment from the government was observed to be very minimal, and this appears to have influenced the participation of government representatives in the overall FIP process. As earlier mentioned, in the African context, the lack of infrastructure and capabilities of these government departments often resulted in a lot of challenges with FIP processes, especially in terms of stock assessment and the availability of relevant data for the FIP process. This provides a lot of drawbacks to the smooth functioning of such FIP

processes, especially in terms of capacity building and training efforts which can take most projects up to 3 years to effectively implement.

External partners and NGOs are very active participants in the region, leading or supporting most of these FIPs. Their purview over interactions within the process is seemingly transparent and goal oriented (that is improving the fishery to an acceptable level of sustainability) while including fishery stakeholders in the process. Many of these external partners involve the fishing community from the very onset so as to ensure project leaders understand community needs and how to better approach improvements for the fishery. Their participation in policy formulation and work plan development processes is relatively open and relevant actors are given a place at the decision-making table. They coordinate workshops and training sessions for the people. They address participation challenges such as those experienced in Mozambique and Tanzania where language barriers limited the participants from becoming fully involved with the FIP. These external partners have also been very active in lobbying other organizations to support fisheries, especially when it comes to the cost of their pre-assessments and other improvement initiatives.

Through lobbying from NGOs and the MSC, international seafood industry actors, particularly buyers, have been supporting FIPs in Africa, especially fisheries with high market value. They help promote and advertise the fishery to the international market, thus improving its competitiveness globally. Their support has included funding pre-assessments and improvement initiatives that promote sustainability of the fishery. Of course, their aim for this support is to help the fishery meet standards set by the MSC for it to possibly get the eco-label and garner the benefits attached to it. The local industries are

equally very supportive within these FIP initiatives by providing human resources or data collection and making available fish stock data within their reach to assist the scientific and technological aspects of the fishery improvements.

Conclusively, FIPs in Africa are mostly externally-led by various NGOs and international partners who all have the common interest of ensuring the sustainability of these fisheries. Governments are not as willing or able to commit financially to these projects, though they are present in most of the decision-making processes of the FIP through their various government departments. The fishers are challenged with low education levels that affect their full participation and understanding of the FIP guidelines. Above all, there are many ways to improve these fisheries through stakeholders involvement, participation, and collaboration.

6.2 Recommendations

Whilst the sustainability of wild-caught fisheries remains a very important challenge for future generations and for conservation purposes, FIPs are a new global trend for the governance and management of fisheries that encourage stakeholders' participation for sustainability. The need to promote and support the competitiveness of African fisheries in the international market has been on major policy agendas for many years and been supported by many public and private actors and agents. As carefully outlined above, public and private, state and non-state actors play specific key roles in these FIPs.

The thesis also identified notable challenges in the emergence and development of FIPs, however. Firstly, there is a great need for improvements and advancements to be done in

the region with respect to capacities and capabilities. To be sure, there are existing institutions and infrastructures that support capacity building in the area. The training and retainment of skilled expertise in fish stock data collections, stock assessments and the surveillance/monitoring of fishing areas with patrol boats are all relevant needs. Many people who have been trained have left their position and these trends have been a big issue for most of the FIPs. Thus, looking at better alternatives that prevent such human resource turnover will go a long way in reducing some capacity issues. Most donor-sponsored programs spend many years within their time frame just to ensure they meet the needs of the FIP.

Secondly, governments need to get fully involved with and participate in these improvement initiatives, especially in terms of financial contributions and commitments. Dependence on external funding raises questions about the level of government commitment to the projects. A co-financed system where every participating stakeholder contributes something is an option to consider. Also, the proper follow-up and execution of existing legislation are often very weak or porous. Violations of laws are rampant as the government in most cases lacks the resources to properly enforce these laws within communities, especially those further away from the central government. But as the case of the Gambia illustrates, co-management structures are the best option where community representatives assist in the implementation of these laws and policies at the local level, though its weakness lies in the fact that it is very difficult for a leader who has lived within a community to punish his/her own community members. Overall, there is a need for the

proper consolidation of the role of government in these FIP processes, including financial commitments.

Furthermore, the current focus of local industries could be modified not just to target foreign markets but also to encourage local consumption and marketing of the fish and related fish products. Such a change will help curb the fluctuating market price effects created by international market shocks. As well, the revitalization of the sector to a more lucrative and touristic arena will help attract more tourists to the area, and tourists will potentially be ready to pay extra for the fish products straight from the source and these can equate to the premiums envisaged from having the eco-label. Investing in such local industries will not only boost the economy of these fishing communities and the country but also create wealth and jobs for the people, thus reducing poverty and unemployment of the people to some levels. With such a vibrant local industry, there will be more investments in the FIP-related activities and will help reduce the overdependency nature of the fisheries to external funding sources. Communities will be more willing and engaged in any initiatives that seek to make their fisheries sustainable since they are seeing the direct benefit of their involvement and the value of their fisheries.

To accentuate the need for better community participation through a very industrious fishery sector, actors and agents could prioritize not only the direct fishery improvement initiatives through science, technology and management infrastructures but also through investments and efforts that directly improve the livelihood of the people. This could make them more interested in the FIP initiatives and provide evidence to attract the people needed to participate in these necessary processes. Also, the establishment of proper channels

through which fishers (small-scale), can be properly represented within the work plan development and policy formulation processes of a FIP is extremely important. Fishers have a very important role in directing the FIP for more effective improvements owing to their life experiences in the sea and harvesting fish for their livelihood.

6.3 Future Research

This research has explored and examined the governance and involvement of multiple actors within FIPs in Africa. Despite such an in-depth analysis of these FIPs in the region, there exists several directions and emerging trends for further research related to FIPs in the region. The research focused on just one case study (the Gambian Sole Fishery), whereas a comparative case analysis between several FIPs could better reveal patterns of similarities and differences within and across multiple African FIPs. The single case study alone cannot fully represent the actual situation for African FIPs, given the great diversity amongst FIPs. There is also a need for research to effectively categorize and examine the different fisheries and their current management structures. Also, because this research had very little involvement on the part of government officials, as few were willing to participate in the research, additional research focused on the participation of government representatives in FIP processes is required.

Furthermore, due to the small-scale nature of these fisheries, there is a need for additional community-based research initiatives that critically explore community understandings, impressions, motivations, challenges and needs related to how and why they do and do not participate in FIP activities. Similarly, there is a need for research to enhance understanding of the benefits or lack thereof of these FIP initiatives for the fishers and community

members. Though the sustainability of the fishery is promoted as a primary benefit for their engagement, there is a need for further research on the exact benefits small-scale fishers receive or do not receive if a fishery finally achieves MSC certification and the ecolabel.

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