

INPUTS

Technical and legal support
Capacity building
Toolbox
Fisheries intelligence
Communication and awareness



OUTPUTS

Better and more cost effective use of MCS resources
Collaboration to secure convictions
Increased compliance in the fisheries sector

The West Africa Task Force aims to achieve improved governance of the sector, leading to sustainable fish stocks and more income and fish for Task Force countries.

HOW DOES THE WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE WORK?

The WATF works to improve compliance within the industrial fishery sector as it is in this sector that the majority of impacts and losses of illegal activities in the region occurs.

The WATF will build on the core values of cooperation, collaboration and information sharing to develop an active network of well trained, well informed National Working Groups. Adopting a multi-agency approach, through the National Working Groups, will enable greater monitoring, control and surveillance of the fisheries sector ensuring that fish are caught, processed and traded legally.

Through the establishment and work of National Working Groups the members of the West Africa Task Force will:

- Facilitate cooperation and collaboration
- Establish national and regional communication mechanisms
- Exchange information and intelligence
- Increase awareness of fisheries issues with relevant agencies
- Improve compliance levels and bring illegal operators to justice

The agencies involved in the National Working Groups may vary from country to country depending on the legal framework and institutions.



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The Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) member States



WHO IS IN THE WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE?

The Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) member States – Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo – are the founding members of the West Africa Task Force and are at the core of all activities. These countries provide political and operational championing of the Task Force, actively cooperate on fisheries controls and share information between countries, and establish the National Working Groups (NWGs). The NWGs form the nucleus of national level fisheries intelligence gathering and analysis, and cooperate on MCS planning and operations.

The WATF is supported by a Technical Team made up of:

- The FCWC Secretariat provides technical, planning and activity coordination support.
- Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT), a Norwegian based organisation with fisheries intelligence expertise, provides support and training through its vessel tracking and investigative capacities and administratively manages the project.
- Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF), a pan-African Working Group provides communications support, guides the growth of cooperation and partnerships with relevant organisations in the region, and provides technical expertise.
- NFDS, a Norwegian fisheries consultancy will provide technical MCS and legal support.
- The Norwegian Government, through Norad, provides the funding for the WATF to be implemented.

For more information on the West Africa Task Force go to: www.fcwc-fish.org

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HOW WILL THE WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE DEVELOP?

Global levels of illegal activities in the fisheries sector present major challenges for law enforcement, for food and nutrition security and for economic development. Tackling the established, organized transnational criminal groups responsible will take time and will require a sustained, long-term effort. By establishing mechanisms for sharing information and intelligence, by building partnerships and by harnessing the resources of many government departments and agencies, the WATF is building a regional infrastructure that will help prevent illegal fishing and deter illicit processors and traders in the years ahead.

The Task Force approach to fighting illegal fishing is a proven model. The FISH-i Africa Task Force has been in operation in the Western Indian Ocean region since 2012 and provides a good example of how much can be achieved with intelligence and information sharing, combined with the will to challenge illegal practices.

The West Africa Task Force has the opportunity to expand both within the West African region to include more coastal countries and regional organisations, and also to grow their international network to connect with more partners globally. Expansion would provide a stronger network of information and support and greater opportunity to stop illegal fishing.



AT SEA
IN PORT
ON LAND



West Africa Task Force
Working together to stop illegal fishing

The West Africa Task Force

WORKING TOGETHER TO STOP ILLEGAL FISHING

Fisheries enforcement officers are central in the fight against illegal fishing, ensuring that fish are caught, offloaded, transhipped and imported in a legal manner.

As awareness of the range of violations being committed in the fisheries sector has grown, so too has the recognition of the need for fisheries officers to work alongside, and in close cooperation with a range of agencies at the national, regional and international level.

The West Africa Task Force (WATF) has been established between the Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) member States to enable this multi-agency, inter-regional and international approach to fighting illegal fishing.



What powers do we have in stopping illegal fishing?



AT SEA

Airforce

Fishing vessel

Patrol vessel



IN PORT

Boat offloading

Port Authority

Customs



ON LAND

Offices

Shops

Trucks



Fisheries Ministry and MCS Department

Fisheries Ministry and MCS Departments ensure the catching, offloading, transshipment, import and trade in fish and fisheries products are undertaken legally. Developing national inter-agency cooperation is vital to increase compliance and to stop illegal fishing.

AT SEA				IN PORT				ON LAND			
Navy & Coastguard	Maritime	Airforce	Police	Port Authorities	Customs	Health, Sanitary & Veterinary	Labour & Immigration	Tax	Trade	Judiciary	Attorney General
CONCERNS											
Is this vessel being operated legally in my EEZ?	Are maritime standards being met e.g. pollution, labour and safety?	Is this vessel being operated legally in my EEZ?	Have any laws been broken?	Is there any reason why I should deny access to this vessel?	Are the products correctly labelled? Are they eligible for trade and are the correct duties being paid?	Are the fish being caught, handled and stored in a hygienic way?	Are the crew working legally and safely aboard the vessel?	Have the correct taxes been paid?	Does the catch comply with all import and export regulations?	Have any laws been broken?	Are the correct laws in place to deter and prevent illegal fishing? Are they sufficient to prosecute fisheries crime?
ACTIONS											
Inspect for compliance at sea	Receive reports from and inspect vessels used for fishing related activities, including carrier and supply vessels. Inspect and survey vessels, and as necessary detain vessels	Detect and photograph any illegal activity in the EEZ, may conduct inspections if helicopter is available	Investigate and enforce national laws in accordance with respective mandates, enforce denial of use of port	Control entry into port and facilitate inspections	Inspect and provide customs clearance as appropriate for fish, fish products landed or transhipped in port	Inspect fish and the working conditions to ensure compliance with relevant national or market States standards, laws and regulations	Inspect ID documents of master and crew. Inspect to ensure relevant national and international standards for labour on board vessels are being met	Investigate to ensure the correct taxes have been paid	Clear or refuse entry to market	Apply appropriate fines and custodial sentences	Ensure national laws are adequate, review outcomes of investigations and support legal or administrative proceedings in cases of suspected non-compliance or violations