Participants in the Regional Training Workshop in the Caribbean.

“The enhanced use of these modern communication and information sharing tools, such as video-conferencing, social networking, tools for online collaborative document preparation and editing, can result in significant cost savings, increased productivity and outputs, as well as boost the earnings and income of fishers, and improve competitiveness and profitability within the fisheries and aquaculture sector,” said Milton Haughton, Executive Director of CRFM at the 3 days training in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In Eastern Africa work with the LVFO through “Strengthening the capacity of LVFO and its member states in regional information sharing and communication for the sustainable management of the Lake Victoria fisheries” (EA-5.1-B21) supported the LVFO Secretariat to co-ordinate the process of devising an ICT Strategy for the organisation. The Strategy is the result of a consultative process lead by the LVFO and set out overall and specific objectives and information needed to support the achievement of them, whilst the Action Plan itemises the necessary steps to be completed.

The ACP Fish II Programme is providing Technical Assistance to the SPC Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) in the Pacific under a similar project: “Building capacity of ACP member states of the SPC in information sharing and communication for fisheries management” (PAC-5.1-B19). This project has only very recently commenced implementation but will involve the drafting of an ICT strategy for the organisation and the development of online tools for information and knowledge sharing, based around a website.

A second tranche of projects under this component have been developed in Western and Central Africa supporting sub-regional groupings to develop or improve specific information and knowledge management systems. These projects are in different states of delivery but provide a range of support to the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), and the Regional Fisheries Committee of the Gulf of Guinea (COREP).

All assignments executed under these areas have included on-the-job training or formal, classroom-based hands-on training for both the envisaged users of the developed tools and the website managers/administrators. Detailed manuals are available to users and managers.

Whilst it is too early to assess outcomes of these interventions in terms of improved fisheries management, initial indications (e.g. membership of online groups, use of meeting tools) suggest regional stakeholders are now willing and able to use the tools made available to work more efficiently and facilitate sharing and exchange of fisheries related information.
and at the request of the target groups, supported a number of projects across ACP regions. This has been accomplished either by enhancing business management skills of fisherfolks or strengthening their organisations. Some of these projects are briefly reviewed below.

In Western Africa, 36 women from groups of fish processors and traders in Liberia were trained in good sanitary practice and management of small businesses for 5 days in Monrovia in October 2012 (Project WA-4.1-B18). The training was centred on the following topics: technical conditions for the production and marketing of good quality and safe fishery products; organisation and management of small-scale fishery enterprises; and design and delivery of training courses to small-scale operators at community level. According to one of the trainees, Annette Johnson, Chairlady of the Liberia Artisanal Fishermen Association (LAFA) Women Wing, “the lessons learnt are very important to improving our trade. This will help us add value to our products for better income”.

In the Caribbean, 27 cooperative members from the nine functional Fishermen Cooperatives in Saint Lucia were trained in governance, credit management, inventory management, membership development and management for 2 days in January 2013 (Project CAR-4.1-B17c). The organisational assessment made it possible to identify the major issues and challenges facing the cooperative movement generally and to identify possible solutions. The project highlighted the need for a national plan in collaboration with the Competent Authorities to address the challenges faced. It also demonstrated the need to foster collaboration and cooperation among cooperatives in the delivery of services and benefits to the members.

All these training programmes combined the learning-by-doing process, training of trainers and adult-learning techniques. Each produced a Trainers’ Manual or Handbook. It has also been observed that the trainees are not only putting the newly acquired knowledge and skills into practice, they are also sharing them with other members of their communities. “LAFA will disseminate (the) training by creating awareness and sensitisation in the very fishing communities. LAFA will also disseminate this training by soliciting support for the organising of community-based workshops in the various fishing communities”, says Annette Johnson.

Most of these projects have also been supplemented by other related projects with support either from the ACP Fish II Programme itself or other programmes. For instance, as a follow-up action to Project WA-4.1-B18, the ACP Fish II Programme will, at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture of Liberia, support an additional training at the community level (Project WA-4.1-B19). This new project is about to start.

On the other hand, the SmartFish Programme used the Trainers’ Manual produced in the context of Project WA-4.1-B18 to facilitate intra-regional knowledge sharing as a first step. The interventions funded are the result of a participatory and demand-driven process with beneficiaries through 2011 and 2012. The ultimate aim of projects in this area supported by the ACP Fish II Programme was to increase information and knowledge sharing in pursuit of fisheries management objectives. The interventions were not designed to improve websites or ICTs per se, but rather were to be framed by an objective hierarchy to ensure that the use of the ICTs would be results-oriented and contribute to achieving overall programme goals.

As such, the ICT systems and tools proposed for support were set within an agreed communication or information strategy as was the case with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation (LVFO).

Following the completion of the focused strategic planning exercise, the Programme provided Technical Assistance to develop or improve the website and other communication or collaboration tools and techniques. Training was the third aspect of these projects.

In the assignment in the Caribbean “Strengthening the capacity of CRFM and its member states for information and knowledge sharing on sustainable fisheries in the Caribbean region (CAR-5.1-B20)” a consultative process was followed resulting in a revised draft Communications Strategy for the CRFM. The Strategy included a technical annex (ICT Strategy) detailing the aim, specific objectives and activities in the development of a series of communication and collaboration tools, and data sharing tools, some of which are embedded in the improved website and others which remain on an external platform.
Overview of Fisherfolk Organisations: types, role and constraints

Like any other rural producer organisations (POs), there is a wide variety of fisherfolk organisations (FOs) depending on their forms and functions. Typical examples are Beach Management Units (BMUs), Beach Village Committees (BVCs), fisheries cooperatives, producer associations and associations. These organisations play a crucial role not only as a means of channelling the supply and marketing of their members’ products and in mobilising resources, but also in providing them with business-oriented services. Unlike individual commercial producers, they can collectively defend their interests and achieve economies of scale along the value chain. Arguably, they can play a more meaningful role in that regard and in fisheries management. In fact, local problems tend to be better solved through local collective rather than individual actions. A number of such organisations have been formed across ACP countries. However diverse in their legal status, functions, geographical scope and size, they are generally characterised as facing similar constraints. One such constraint is their limited capacities mainly in resource management, governance, business management and marketing.

ACP Fish II Support

Various forms of outside support have been provided by governments, NGOs and development agencies to empower existing FOs with a view to enabling them to overcome their constraints and to participate more effectively in fisheries management. To that end, the ACP Fish II Programme has so far, as part of its Component 4 (Improved Business Support and Private Sector Investment), and at the request of the target groups, supported a number of projects across ACP regions. This has been accomplished either by enhancing business management skills of fisherfolk or strengthening their organisations. Some of these projects are briefly reviewed below.

In Western Africa, 36 women from groups of fish processors and traders in Liberia were trained in good sanitary practice and management of small businesses for 5 days in Monrovia in October 2012 (Project WA-4.1-B18). The training was focused on the following topics: technical conditions for the production and marketing of quality and safe fishery products; organisation and management of small-scale fishery enterprises; and design and delivery of training courses to small-scale operators at community level.

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The Programme would like to thank stakeholders participating in all consultative sessions, surveys, validation workshops, trainings and other project activities. Their commitment and contribution is the core of this Programme and the main tool to strengthen fisheries management in ACP countries.

ACP Fish II expects to have 193 projects implemented before the end of November 2013. Out of these 193 projects, 141 are either concluded (91) or ongoing (50) as of May 2013. The concluded projects resulted in high quality technical outputs and beneficiary countries (and regional organisations) are now able to initiate follow up measures to bring about real change in the fisheries management in ACP states. We enter now the final phase of Programme implementation aiming to secure the successful execution of the remaining 52 projects.

The ACP Fish II Programme is guided by a Steering Committee composed of key Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or their representatives.

The fifth meeting of the Steering Committee was held on 5th February 2013 in the ACP Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium. The following RECs designated participants: ECOWAS: Mr. Sanon Yacouba; COMESA: HE Mr. Gervais Nkanagu; CARICOM/CRFM: Mr. Milton Haughton; CESTAC/ECOS: Mr. Georges Mba Assah; and UEMOA: Mr. Ousmane Kine.

The relevance of the ACP Working Group on Fisheries (WGF) and the relationship that was established with the ACP Fish II initiatives and projects lead to the participation of HE Mr. Peceli Vocea, Ambassador of Fiji and President of the WGF and Mr. Bruce Chapman, ACP Fisheries Adviser.

The Steering Committee final recommendations were:

- Additional assistance should be provided by the EU to support the development and management of fisheries in ACP states. This support would ensure that the significant benefits of the ACP Fish II Programme are capitalised on and translated to improved living standards and reduction of poverty in the member states;
- Outputs of the ACP Fish II Programme must be available to stakeholders in the long term through the programme website which may be hosted through the support of the ACP Secretariat;
- The PMU should consider the possibility of organising a series of Regional Workshops to assist the private sector in strengthening skills related to preparation of project proposals;
- DEVCO follow through on the commitments made today to ensure all the documents are approved in a timely fashion thereby increasing the chances that all projects planned in the RAP will be implemented.

1 - STATUS OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION
2 - SUPPORTING NATIONAL FISHERIES ORGANISATIONS
3 - FISHERIES MANAGEMENT: INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING
4 - STRENGTHENING THE FISHERIES POLICY FRAMEWORK

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The Steering Committee of the Gulf of Guinea (COREP).

Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC); and the Regional Fisheries Organisation (FAME) in the Pacific.

The programme aims to contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of LVFO and its member states in the area of regional information sharing and communication for the sustainable management of the Lake Victoria fisheries. We enter now the final phase of Programme implementation aiming to secure the successful execution of the remaining 52 projects.
4. STRENGTHENING THE FISHERIES POLICY FRAMEWORK

Governance of any sector should be lead by a proper policy framework aiming at identifying major priorities and constraints, setting the key objectives to be addressed and proposing the most appropriate methodology for their achievement. Fisheries are not an exception in that regard. The fisheries policy framework, prepared at various levels, is generally understood to mean the policy document itself as well as policy instruments (such as strategic plans, management plans and legislation) devised to serve the achievement of the policy objective.

General principles guiding policy development processes have been re-examined in recent years. Traditionally fisheries sector policy has focused more on resources exploitation and maximizing production with much less attention given to issues concerning the people engaged in or dependent on fishing activities. However, this approach has changed in recent years. At international level the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and associated technical guidelines, and the OECD’s reports on sustainable fisheries set out some key approaches to be followed during the policy-making process (e.g. evidence based, results oriented, inclusive, coherent at national, regional and international scales) as well as key issues to be addressed in content such as equitable access to resources, sustainability of fisheries, food security, poverty alleviation, ecosystem approach to fisheries, co-management and need for regional collaboration.

It is in this framework that ACP Fish II Programme continues to support improvements in fisheries policy frameworks at regional and national level. Whilst assignments have been completed at different levels of the hierarchy (e.g. policies, legislative improvements and management plans) the following narrative will focus on our support to the preparation or revising of fisheries policy documents themselves. In the first instance, ACP Fish II support aims to align fisheries and aquaculture policies to internationally accepted standards in both policy-making process and content. In all assignments, the policy making process was characterized by strong involvement and active participation of key sector stakeholders in both the formulation and validation phase of the policy process. Furthermore, in recognition of the need for improved policy-process skills amongst beneficiaries, all assignments were devised with strong capacity-building components. To date, the Programme has provided support to 16 countries in the preparation or revision of fisheries policy documents, with assistance planned for another country in the near future. Similarly, instruments of fisheries policy have been improved in more than 28 countries with assistance planned in a further 8 countries in the near future. Some examples of this support are outlined below:

In Southern Africa Region, Malawi and Swaziland benefited from the project “Revision of National Policy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Malawi and National Fisheries Policy in Swaziland” - SA-1.2-A5. In Malawi approximately 100 stakeholders were consulted in Mzuzu, Salima, Mangochi and Zomba. In Swaziland, the main stakeholders consulted were drawn from key institutions in the sectors of Environment, Water, HIV/AIDS, Agriculture, Commerce, Trade, Office of Prime Minister, and Finance. Final Validation Workshops for the policy documents were held in both countries and eventually the final draft policies were endorsed by local stakeholders and fisheries administrations. The National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy in Swaziland has been recently approved by the Government, while in Malawi the document was still before the Cabinet for final discussion and approval at the time of writing. These achievements enabled the two countries to tackle the legislative revision process as to comply with the new Policy (action also supported by ACP Fish II).

In the Caribbean support was given to the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat, to finalize the draft Common Fisheries Policy for the Caribbean Community and its submission via the Ministerial Council to the CARICOM Heads of Government for consideration - CAR-1.2-A1. The process involved field visits to Barbados, Guyana, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago; and a consultation workshop in Guyana involving over 60 senior officers from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Fisheries Departments and Legal Departments of the CARICOM Member States (from 14 countries) and regional organisations and the Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Organisations to review and provide comments to assist in finalizing the Agreement. During the 5th CRFM Ministerial Council Meeting the draft text was submitted and adopted by consensus. Since the Ministers’ approval, the draft was further approved in CARICOM by the Council for Trade and Economic Development, by the Council for Foreign and Community Relations and reviewed and approved by the CARICOM Legal Affairs Committee (Attorneys General of Member States). As of May 2013 the draft Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy is awaiting final approval and signature by the CARICOM Heads of Government.
In Eastern Africa Region, the Fisheries Administration in South Sudan was assisted in preparing a Fisheries Policy for the country to guide future development and decision-making in the sector – EA-1.2-B1a. Two Consultative Workshops were held in Juba and in Terekeka in December 2011 and were attended by 69 stakeholders from the public and private sectors as well as fishing communities; and a final draft of the Policy was validated in a National Workshop in Juba in February 2012 attended by 33 national and state level stakeholders. The Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries (MARF) presented and defended the draft Policy on behalf of stakeholders and in December 2012 the Council of Ministers approved the document. For the Minister in charge, the “Fisheries Policy is a cornerstone in the development of a strong and vibrant capture fisheries and aquaculture industry, contributing to the economy of the country, food security, and the alleviation of poverty particularly in rural areas”. Furthermore, the Council approved the supplementary budget of the MARF necessary for the implementation of this policy for the next 5 years.

In Togo, Western Africa Region, the project “Formulation of a sectoral policy document on fisheries and aquaculture and preparation of a fisheries management plan of the Nangbeto dam lake” was completed in 2012- WA-1.2-002. The Project aimed to provide overall guidance for fisheries sector development alongside specific management measures for this key fisheries resource. The implementation of this project was characterized by a strong participatory approach effectively involving a wide range of actors from different concerned sectors across the country (Government, research institutions, private sector, etc.) in the development of the policy document. This intervention furthermore enabled strengthening the institutional capacity of the Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Togo, which is now better equipped to co-ordinate internal and external support and to implement the fisheries and aquaculture action plan.

The project improving fisheries policy instruments and management systems in the Southern Gulf of Guinea (CA-1.2-001) implemented in Central Africa Region, aimed at supporting fisheries administration in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea to develop appropriate fisheries policies and management mechanisms to ensure sustainable, optimum and equitable use of fisheries resources. This project involved a 4-day national workshop on fisheries policy formulation and implementation in Cameroon and in Equatorial Guinea attended by the main stakeholders in both countries, including training to Policy officials and other stakeholders on formulation and implementation of fisheries policies. The outcome was a draft document for a national Fisheries Policy Framework which has been validated in a national workshop in each country. The policy documents were presented to the Administrations of both countries and they are pending approval by the highest levels of the State before implementation.

In addition to the provision of Technical Assistance in direct support of the policy-making process, the ACP Fish Programme has provided training for responsible officers in the process of policy analysis and development in the Pacific under project PAC-1.5-B9. Best practice and experience in the policy-making process gathered internationally were brought to bear in this assignment completed in December 2012. Following a review of the fisheries policy framework at national, regional and international scale across the Pacific, the results were used to develop a focused and practical training event aimed at building technical competencies in this field. The training workshop lasted 5 days and was attended by 15 participants from across the Pacific. A practical guide, “Formulating Fisheries Policy Instruments”, providing a series of checklists and templates, was prepared through the assignment and was to be the basis for follow-up training conducted at the national level.

Similar support is underway to the aquaculture sub-sector in the Pacific region (PAC-1.2-B4) through a study analyzing the policy framework and then delivering training in aquaculture policy development. The assignment will ultimately produce a set of practical guidelines to assist national policy makers in devising a supportive aquaculture policy framework.