



EUROPEAN UNION  
Delegation to the African Union  
The Ambassador

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**Subject: FOOD/2020/419716 Project Fish Gov. II and the support to “non-state actors” platforms**

**Reference: Your letter R-03-23/WG4**

Dear Chair, Dear Executive Secretary,

This is to confirm that the EU Delegation to the African Union has received your letter in reference through the Headquarters. As you may know, the EU Delegation to the African Union is managing the contribution agreement of the project Fisheries Governance Phase 2 (FishGov2), implemented by AU-IBAR, in collaboration with the AUDA-NEPAD and the AUC's Directorate of Agriculture, rural Development and Blue Economy (DARBE).

As rightly indicated in your letter, the EU acknowledged as a major achievement, in the FishGov1 programme the establishment of regional Non-State Actor's platforms, including the African coordinating platform for Non-State actors in fisheries and aquaculture (AFRIFISH NET) and of the continental African Women fish processors and traders (AWFISH NET). We believe these are significant steps towards having a coordinated voice of Non-States actors at continental level and AU policy organs deliberations.

It was in the same spirit, during the formulation of the FishGov2 programme, that the EU ensured that one of the objectives would be the rationalization and strengthening of non-state actors for effective role and advocacy in national, regional and continental fisheries management and aquaculture development

Regarding the concerns raised in your letter, we are preparing to launch very soon the project's mid-term evaluation, which will give particular attention to consultation with Non-State Actors and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to see how the collaboration and support could be further improved during the remaining period of implementation of the project.

While awaiting the results of this mid-term evaluation, I would like to provide you more information on specific concerns raised in your letter:

- **The funded actions rely essentially on the recruitment of consultants to produce studies that have already been done in the past:**

During the FishGov2 project's formulation, the **African Union Centres of Excellences (COEs)**, that are Universities or research institutions, were identified as the key institutions that would be contracted to provide requisite technical expertise for implementation of the project. This was largely founded on the rationale that a key strategic objective of FishGov2 is to facilitate access to quality data and information for informed and rational decision making at all levels of governance. Thus, the project's strategy was based on developing strong partnership or collaboration with the African Union endorsed COEs in order to utilize their technical expertise in various disciplines to implement selected project activities.

As regards the studies that have been done in the past, in principle no studies are repeated as such. Some studies are the continuation of studies that were to cover 55 AU member states but only covered few AU member states, for example:

- The studies on domestication of policy framework and reform strategy for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) were conducted successfully and to completion only in five AU member states out of 55 AU member states. Thus, the studies are being conducted in other 15 AU member states with the support of FishGov2 by the Centre of excellence of the University of Cape Coast;
- The studies on strengthening institutional collaboration between regional fisheries bodies (RFBs) and regional economic communities (RECs) are being expanded. During the FishGov1, formal anchorage was strengthened between ECCAS (Economic Community for Central African States) and the COREP (Regional Fisheries Commission for the Gulf of Guinea). However, there are eight RECs and several RFBs. Thus, the project FishGov2 has developed a mechanism by Centres of excellences (NAFIRRI in Uganda) to fast-track institutional linkages between remaining RECS and RFBS (Regional Fisheries Bodies) and to draw on lessons and best practices from COREP and ECCAS process.

- **We do not see any concrete and direct action that can have a concrete impact on the lives and livelihoods of people who depend on fisheries in Africa.**

Based on the project's three specific objectives below, the project's impacts should be expected mainly in the medium-term, additional information on the impact will however be requested in the framework of the mid-term evaluation. For your information, the specific objectives are the following:

1. African Union decisions on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture policies are evidence based
2. Fisheries and aquaculture policies in Africa are coherent with the PFRS and other AU priorities and coordinated at continental, regional and national levels
3. Africa is adequately represented and effectively participates in international fisheries and aquaculture fora and ably domesticates relevant global instruments

- **Your assessment on the fact that the project has failed to fulfil its specific objectives for adequately supporting non state actors participation:**

The project Fish Gov2 is supporting the participation of non-state actors with the establishment of regional NSAs platforms in West Africa (WANSAFA), Central Africa (PRAPAC), East Africa (EARFISH) and Southern Africa (SANSAFA) as coordinating platforms to enhance their coherent voice in the management of the sector. All these NSAs are represented every year (on a rotational basis) at the Project Technical and steering meeting. The project Fish Gov2 has also facilitated the establishment of the continental coordinating NSA platform, AFRIFISH-NET and its president Mr. Gaoussou Gueye, represented the regional platforms at the project technical coordination and project steering committee meetings held in Nairobi, Kenya, last December 2022. The women

association were represented by the president of African women fish processors and traders network (AWFISHNET), Mrs Beyene.

- **Ensure transparency and traceability of the funding, for greater efficiency and value for money**

The AU-IBAR is the lead Partner in charge of the project Fish Gov2 implementation and is a pillar assessed organization. The funding management is done in line with the EU rules and procedures for pillar assessed entities. The established procedures are: provision of annual audit of the project's expenditure, annual narrative report, annual meeting of project technical meeting and project steering committee in which stakeholders (including NSA) and the donor (EU) participate as statutory members. The project implementation agency, AU-IBAR, and the collaborating agency, AUDA-NEPAD, follow AUC' rules in terms of procurement, financial regulations. Our EUD is also monitoring the implementation on a continuous base. The programme is also subject to of mid-term and final evaluation, result oriented monitoring (ROM). We also acknowledge that challenges in staff recruitment have impacted the project's implementation and timeframe.

- **In particular, we suggest that FISH GOV II adequately supports the functioning of the AFRIFISH platform**

I agree that the project Fish Gov2 should prioritise support to accompany the NSAs in developing their viable fundraising strategy. The project's mid-term evaluation to be launched soon will also pay attention to this aspect and we will request the experts to make concrete and operational recommendations to for the remaining period of implementation.

However, several NSAs and RECs are consistently asking to be directly supported through the funds of the Fish Gov2 project, hence the request for support is not limited to AFRIFISH-NET. While those expectations are legitimate they go behind the project's objectives. While we support NSAs capacity we also encourage NSAs to enhance sustainability and not relying on the project to meet the long term functioning needs.

Concerning AFRIFISH-NET, in particular, this aligns with what was indicated by the consultative workshop held in Accra, Ghana (from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021) that recommended NSAs to develop viable fundraising strategy to establish sustainable funding sources with the assistance of AU-IBAR, AUDA-NEPAD and FAO.

Finally, we highly appreciate your views and we believe that the key points shared will be subject of the mid-term evaluation. Rest ensured that the EU Delegation will continue engaging with AUC, AU-IBAR and AUDA NEPAD to ensure that NSAs are well involved and adequately benefitting from the project.

Yours Sincerely,



Birgitte MARKUSSEN  
Ambassador | Head of EU Delegation to the African Union

CC:

- Mr. Leonardo Mizzi, Head of Unit Sustainable Agri- Food System and Fisheries  
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- Dr Nick Nwankpa, Acting Director AU –IBAR