



Attn:
Mr. Leonardo Mizzi
Head of Unit, Sustainable Agri Food System and Fisheries
DG INTPA

Madrid, 26th April 2023
Ref: R-03-23/WG4

Subject: FishGov II and the support to non-state actors' platforms

Dear Sir,

With regards the international partnership policy of the EU, an estimated 1 billion euro have been committed to promoting better ocean governance and sustainable development of the blue economy in partner countries (2014 to 2020), of which 450 million euros were dedicated to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture projects. Within the framework of the Europe-Africa partnership, the programming of projects for sub-Saharan Africa covering the period 2021-2027 gives greater emphasis to oceans and fisheries, with a specific focus on the work with key continental, regional networks, platforms and associations in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. This is something the LDAC welcomes.

Within that framework, there is a need to support the strengthening of the dialogue with fisheries non state actors in all aspects of Europe-Africa fisheries relations, from bilateral and multilateral fisheries agreements to project programming or the evaluation of their results. The EU and the African Union are well aware of this, as shown by the support given to the constitution of regional and continental non-State fisheries actors platforms through the EU funded FishGov I and FishGov II projects.

The 13.2 million euros **FishGov II Project** (2021 – 2025) seeks to enhance the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to the achievement of the AU Agenda 2063's objectives, especially sustainable livelihoods, food and nutritional security, and wealth creation.

The AU Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the AU Development Agency-(AUDA-NEPAD) financially supported the creation of five platforms bringing together non-state fisheries actors in African regions. Then came the desire to bring these regional platforms together in a pan-African platform, which led to the creation of **AFRIFISH**, the continental platform that brings together non-state actors in African fisheries, supported by the financing of FISH GOV I & II projects EU. AFRIFISH will become a partner of the LDAC in 2023. The MoU is to provide a framework of cooperation to facilitate collaboration between

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the Parties with the aim to further their shared goals and objectives identified in their work programs or strategic plans, including provision of joint or harmonized advice to the competent authorities and governing bodies from the EU and Africa in the establishment and implementation of policies on the EEZ waters of the African continent that have a direct or indirect environmental, social and economic impact both on artisanal and industrial fishers of Africa and the EU.

The LDAC notes with concern that, although the EU recognized the difficulties in the implementation of FISH GOV I, yet the FISH GOV 2 project was adopted on a similar model, and we see the same difficulties arising.

On reading the FISH GOV II project, although the objectives and expected results are interesting as a whole, the funded actions rely essentially on the recruitment of consultants to produce studies that have already been done in the past. 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.

The participation of fisheries non state actors, in particular organisations representing fishing communities, through appropriate means must be a priority in the definition, implementation and evaluation of the results of fisheries projects supported under the EU-AU partnership.

In the African Union's Strategy and Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa adopted in 2014, small-scale fisheries are presented as essential in the fight against poverty and for contributing to food security. The AU also recognizes the crucial role of women in African artisanal fisheries, in processing, trading and harvesting fish. However in practice, the AU does not take sufficiently into account their needs, and local fishing communities and civil society should be more involved in the work of the AU and the implementation of Fish Gov II project.

The FishGov II project is now in its mid-term review phase and we note that the project has failed to fulfill its specific objectives for adequately supporting non state actors participation:

- “objective 2.2.4. Facilitate stakeholders consultation on the design and implementation of national and regional strategies”, with a 30 000 EUR budget.
- “objective 2.3.4. Enhance the capacity of fisheries and aquaculture traders with due consideration for small scale traders and women engaged in fish trade and processing”, with a 20 000 EUR budget

We feel the EU should review its partnership with the AU under the FISH GOV II project, ensure transparency and traceability of the funding, for greater efficiency and value for money. The identification of actions for the 2021-2027 regional programs is underway and therefore offers a window of opportunity to implement these recommendations.

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The LDAC recommends that EU funding through FISH GOV II should be focusing on actions that have a concrete tangible impact on fisheries and fishing communities in Africa. In particular, we suggest that FISH GOV II adequately supports the functioning of the AFRIFISH platform, as a way to ensure the informed participation of all African fisheries and aquaculture non state actors in decision making processes that affect African fishing communities.

Yours faithfully,

Iván López van der Veen
Chair of the EU Long Distance Fleet Advisory Council



Alexandre Rodríguez
Executive Secretary