

The Liberia Fisheries Governance Project

PROJECT LAUNCH



Implemented by



Funded by
the European Union



ACRONYMS

CDO	CERATH Development Organization
CI	Conservation International
CMA	Collaborative Management Association
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Director General
EJF	Environment Justice Foundation
EU	European Union
GoL	Government of Liberia
IUU	Illegal Unregulated and Unreported
LAFA	Liberia Artisanal Fishermen Association
LFGP	Liberia Fisheries Governance Project
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NaFAA	National Fisheries Aquaculture Authority
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CERATH Development Organization (CDO) expresses its gratitude to the European Union (EU) for funding the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project. CDO also thanks the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) for their support and input and for officially launching the project. CDO is also thankful to Mr. Julius Jah for moderating the launch.

CDO's gratitude goes to the media houses for capturing and disseminating proceedings of the occasion. A special thank you goes to all participants for their presence and participation.

And finally, the good Lord be praised for his mercies and for making the event a success.

I.0. BACKGROUND

The Liberia Fisheries Government Project (LFGP) is a 3-year European Union-funded project that targets selected coastal communities in Sinoe County, Liberia. The project aims to improve good governance, democracy, and accountability in the selected coastal landscapes of Sinoe-Liberia through enhanced capacities and performance of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and media actors to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of fishermen in the target areas. The project is implemented by a consortium consisting of CERATH Development Organization (CDO) and Conservation International.

The specific objectives of the project are

- Organization strengthening of CSOs and media institutions as entities for good governance
- Promotion of the Co-Management Association (CMA) approach
- Enhancing women, youth, and marginalized persons' participation in the coastal economy
- • Advocacy on sustainable governance and fisherfolk rights.

Towards creating publicity and informing stakeholders on the rollout of such a fisheries intervention in Liberia, CDO held a project launch. The event had the following objectives:

- To officially announce and mark the commencement of the Liberia Fisheries Project
- To share the project's baseline findings
- To create national awareness of the project.

The event took place at the Corina Hotel, Monrovia, on 20 August 2024. Participants for the occasion included several fisheries stakeholders such as regulators, the project donor agency, civil society organizations, academia, collaborative management associations, fisher groups, and project beneficiaries.

2.0. WELCOME ADDRESS AND OPENING REMARKS

2.1. Program Opening and Welcome Address

The Country Director for CERATH Development Organization, Leroy N.S. Kanmoh, gave the welcome address. In his address to the participants, he introduced the LFGP and emphasized that the project aimed at empowering coastal communities, protecting fisher folk rights, and enhancing the capabilities of local CSOs and media institutions within the project-targeted areas. He informed the audience that the



Figure 1: CERATH Country Director giving the welcome address

project represents more than just another program, it embodies a commitment to creating a more inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance system in Liberia's coastal regions. The CDO director further stated that Liberia's coastal areas, known for their abundant resources and vibrant communities, play a crucial role in the country's economy. However, these areas are also facing challenges that threaten both the livelihoods of those who rely on them and the sustainability of natural resources. Mr. Kanmoh mentioned that the project seeks to tackle these issues by strengthening the capacities of local CSOs and media, both of which are vital in advocating for the rights of coastal communities.

The Country Director expressed optimism that the project objectives would be achieved through the collaboration of all stakeholders, including the public and private sectors, local communities, and international partners. He acknowledged the presence of the European Union (EU) Delegation to Liberia headed by H.E. Ambassador Nona Deprez, National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), local CSOs and media organizations, and all other partners for gracing the occasion.

2.2. Remarks from the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)

During his opening remark, Mr Augustine Fayiah, program officer at EJF, informed the gathering that EJF is currently implementing an EU-funded *Communities for Fisheries* project in collaboration with NaFAA. He mentioned that the project aimed to reduce illegal fishing and improve the sustainability of fisheries by expanding and strengthening community co-management associations (CMA); thus, creating effective capacity for community monitoring and reporting of illegal fishing.



Figure 2: The program officer from EJF giving an opening remark

Mr Fayiah further emphasized that the EJF project started in 2019 and has worked with coastal communities and partners to improve livelihood through supporting the setting-up of CMAs and formulation of CMA policy, village savings and loan associations (VSLA), participatory IUU (illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing) surveillance, training journalists, and working with fishers like Liberia Artisanal Fisher Association (LAFA) to advocate for fisher rights. The EJF representative further mentioned that through the project EJF has established seven CMAs in four counties and established 32 VSLA groups

Mr Fayiah informed the audience that EJF is excited about this new EU-funded project implemented by CDO. “By implementing sustainable practices and effective management strategies, both projects can lay the groundwork for a future where the oceans remain legal and sustainable for future generations”, he said. He concluded by commending CERATH on the launch of the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project

2.3. Remarks from Conservation International



Figure 3: Rep from CI giving an opening remark

The representative from Conservation International, Sabawu R. Yennego, indicated her delight at being part of the day’s event. She went on to comment that CI is implementing the Blue Ocean Project and working in four coastal counties of Liberia.

She mentioned that the Blue Ocean Project focuses on women fishers and seeks their empowerment. She also mentioned that CI was supporting local CSOs and cooperatives, some of which were present for the launch event. She expressed CI’s desire to work with CERATH and wished LFGP success.

2.4. Remarks by the European Union Delegation to Liberia

The EU Ambassador, Nona Deprez, in giving her opening remark emphasized the importance of collaboration, noting the presence of the Environmental Justice Foundation and Conservation International. She praised their efforts in establishing collaborative management associations (CMAs) in other parts of Liberia. She also acknowledged the continued partnership with CERATH, which has been instrumental in the Cassava Transformation Project in the southeast, calling the organization highly professional and competent.



Figure 4: The EU Ambassador giving her opening remark at the launch

The Ambassador underscored the vital role of fisheries for both the Liberian government and the European Union particularly in the context of global initiatives like the European Green Deal and local bilateral programs aimed at promoting safe and sustainable food systems. Liberia's 570-kilometer coastline and abundant marine resources, she noted, have the potential to significantly boost economic growth.

The Ambassador, however, warned of significant challenges that threaten the sector's growth, starting with climate change. She cited issues like rising sea levels, coastal flooding, pelagic seaweed invasion, and increasingly extreme weather events as direct threats to Liberia's coastal communities. Additionally, she raised concerns about illegal industrial trawlers operating within Liberian waters, which further endanger the sustainability of the fisheries sector.

Lastly, she stated that the project launch highlighted the critical need for coordinated efforts to overcome these challenges and fully unlock the potential of Liberia's fisheries.

2.5. Remarks from the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority

Mr. William Y. Boeh, Deputy Director General for Technical Services at the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), in his opening remark, mentioned that NaFAA stands in readiness to develop the sector while counting on the support of the EU. He said NaFAA is ready to stand by CDO to ensure that the fisherfolk in Sinoe benefit from the project.

He further mentioned that the LFGP team should work with the already established structure such as the cooperatives and the NaFAA technical office to ensure that they establish a vibrant CMA.

He concluded that the CMA is a tool necessary for sustainably managing the fisheries sector.



Figure 5: The Deputy Director General for NaFAA giving an opening remark

3.0. LFGP-RELATED PRESENTATIONS

3.1. Presentation on the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project



Figure 6: The CDO Country Director presenting on LFGP

The CERATH Country Director gave an overview of the organization citing its intervention areas: agriculture and forestry, fisheries, renewable energy, inclusive finance, and water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH). He stated CDO’s mission and vision statements, as well as the projects currently being implemented by the organization. The projects include the Cassava Transformation Project, Talking Agribusiness, and the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project which are all funded by the European Union.

He provided a brief presentation about the LFGP. He stated the project goal and objectives and also indicated its targeted beneficiaries. He

went on to mention that the project seeks to work with one thousand (1000) fisherfolk (including women, youth, and marginalized groups), five local CSOs, and two media agencies within its landscape.

3.2. Presentation of the LFGP Baseline Findings

The Project Manager for the LFGP, Mr Derek Adabie, presented the findings of the project’s baseline survey conducted across 13 fishing communities within the project county.

The project manager mentioned that, intrinsically, the baseline sought to establish the status quo on matters relating to fisheries governance within the project landscape and provide a basis to track progress in the delivery of project outputs and outcomes. He went further to provide the goal of the research, which was to contextualize the existing systems and processes employed in fisheries governance within Sinoe County.



Figure 7: The LFGP manager presenting the baseline findings

He stated that a mixed-method approach was used in the study. Data were collected through individual interviews, focus group discussions, and expert interviews.

For the findings of the baseline, the presentation was organized based on (i) demographic information, (ii) local fisheries leadership and governance system, (iii) fisherfolk participation in fisheries governance, and (iv) civil society organizations and media agencies' support to fisheries governance

To his end, he concluded with the following:

- There is an existing local governance structure in place, which can be leveraged towards the CMA facilitation
- Participation in this governance structure is largely male-centered and women's participation is significantly limited
- CSOs within the landscape cater to several important social needs, however, there are no concentrated efforts at fisheries
- Despite the seemingly low attention to fisheries concerns, the local CSOs expressed a strong interest towards facilitating a CMA in Sinoe County.

4.0. KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND LAUNCH DECLARATION



Figure 8: NaFAA Director General declaring the project launched

During the keynote speech, Hon. Emma Glassco, Director General (DG) for NaFAA, provided an overview of the Liberian fisheries sector emphasizing the importance of the sector to the national economy indicating that it provides 20% of dietary protein and livelihoods, both directly and indirectly, for some 65% of the population.

She acknowledged the contribution of the European Union to the fisheries sector of Liberia, indicating that the EU is a strategic partner in giving NaFAA support and building the institution's capacity to manage the sector. She further remarked that the Government of Liberia

(GoL) has the political will to support agriculture and fisheries, which is part of the current government's ARREST agenda. The NaFAA boss mentioned that fisheries and aquaculture are very important for food and revenue generation and that GoL takes it very seriously. Speaking on the issue of awareness, she mentioned that NaFAA has made huge gains saying, *"The institution is visible in all regions including landlock counties with minimum aquaculture activities"*.

Speaking about CMAs, the NaFAA boss said CMAs are a platform where the government and the community share the responsibility of making decisions, taking action, and managing the fisheries sector. She further informed the audience that the Government, through NaFAA, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with all CMAs to remit to them 30% of revenue mobilized.

Regarding the issue of capacity building, she said the government has established a Fisheries and Aquaculture Department at the University of Liberia and is committed to supporting the department churn out needed capacities for the sector. She also requested the EU to direct some of its support to the abovementioned department.

Hon. Glassco pointed out that women play 80% of the role and responsibility in the fisheries sector and appreciated the fact that CDO is mainstreaming gender into the sector.

Finally, by the power vested in her as the Director General of NaFAA, Madam Glassco declared the launch of the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project.

5.0. STAKEHOLDER COMMENTARY AND EVENT CLOSING

5.1. Commentary from Participants

Madam Lorraine G. Mennoh, Sinoe Women Platform's executive director, lauded CERATH for the opportunity that seeks to empower women and mainstream them into key leadership positions within the local fisheries governance structure in Sinoe County. Commenting further, she said that women are the key financiers within the fisheries sector but are forbidden to fish at sea because of traditional reasons which leads to them being excluded from the major decision process in the local fisheries governance structure.

The next comment was made by Voice of Sinoe Radio Station Manager, Mr Elisha A. Boyee. He thanked CERATH for including media in its project. He also informed the audience that media houses have been overlooked in terms of providing national coverage, but now that their capacity is being built, they will use their platform to advocate and report on issues affecting the local fisheries sector in Sinoe.

Andrew B. Doe, NaFAA County Inspector for Sinoe, in response to Madam Lorraine's comment, mentioned that while it is true women are currently not allowed to contest as fishing chiefs, women are allowed to participate in the fishing cooperative leadership and women should take advantage of these leadership opportunities. Speaking further, the Sinoe fisheries officer said that CERATH under LFGP should educate the fisherfolk to end the perpetual regime of the fishing chief. According to the baseline findings, fishing chiefs once elected or appointed, remain in power until death.

In adding to the gender-centred commentary, Madam Sabawu R. Yennego representative of Conservation International informed the gathering that women elsewhere in Maryland County along the Cavalla River are allowed to fish in canoes on the rivers; as such, these women should at least be given the role of secretary within the local fisheries governance structure.

Commenting during the occasion was Mr Jerry D. Mulbah representative from the Environmental Protection Agency. He indicated though LFGP plans to build the capacity of ÇSO, media, and fisherfolks, nothing speaks of environmental safety within the fisheries sector, pointing out that safety is essential in the fisheries sector. He said a safe landing site, proper disposal of old fishing nets, and ensuring the safety of fish processing sites are crucial to maintaining the safety standards within the fisheries sector. To this statement, the Project Manager responded by saying that the project seeks to create an entry point for stakeholder deliberations and decision-making at all levels, through the CMA. And that it is upon such a foundation will all other matters of fisheries concern, such as the environmental issues, be exhaustible deliberated on and needed action steps taken.

For his part, Mr William Y. Boeh, Deputy Director for Technical Services at NaFAA asked why is it that the project did not touch on the fishing cooperatives established by NaFAA in Sinoe County. In response to his question, the Enterprise Development Specialist of the LFGP, Jerome Karnwea, indicated the cooperative structure exists at the district level, but the baseline looked at community-level fisheries governance.

5.2. Closing Remarks

The closing remarks were given by the LFGP manager he paid tribute to earlier and current initiatives towards collaborative fisheries and coastal governance, with particular mentions to NaFAA, EU, EJF, and the CMAs in Margibi, Grand Cape Mount, Montserrado, and Grand Bassa.

He applauded the passionate deliberations that ensued during the event. He further mentioned that the engagements and discussions just got started and that the project will be reaching out to the various stakeholders for their support based on their diverse capacities.

He went on to thank all participants for honouring the invitation with their presence.

ANNEX

Annex I: Event Outline

Time	Item	Person(s) Responsible
9:00-10:00	Arrival, Registration & Breakfast	Participants
10:00-10:10	Purpose of the Gathering	MC
10:10- 10:05	Welcome Remark	Leroy N.S. Kanmoh CDO Country Director, Liberia
10:05 – 10:25	Opening Statements	Representative – Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) Representative – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative – Conservation International (CI) European Union Delegation to Liberia (EU) Hon. Emma Metieh Glassco Director General NaFAA
10:25 – 10:35	Presentation: Overview of LFGP	Leroy N.S. Kanmoh CDO Country Director, Liberia
10:35- 11:10	Presentation: Key findings from the baseline study	Derek Adabie Project Manager
11:10- 11: 20	Q & A	All Participants
10:20 - 11:30	Official Declaration of Project Launch	Hon. Emma Metieh Glassco Director General, NaFAA
11:30- 11:40	Group Photo & Coffee Break	All Participants
11:40 - 11:45	Closing Remarks	Derek Adabie Project Manager
11:45 - 12: 00	Lunch & Networking	Participants

Annex II: Attendance

No	Name	Organization	Email
1	Jack Nyenneh	Margibi County CMA	
2	Jerry D. Mulbah	EPA	dmulbahjr@gmail
3	Elisha A. Boyee	Voice Of Sinoe	elishaaboyee@gmail
4	Jerry N. Blamo	Lafa (Mont)	
5	Lewis E.B. Kanae	NaFAA	lkanae@nafaagov.lr
6	Sabawu R. Yennego	Conservation International	syennego@conservation.org
7	Emmanuel Gbah	Grand Bassa (CMA)	
8	John L. Freeman	Lafa (Sinoe)	
9	Junior W. Tweh	Fising Chief (Sinoe)	
10	Augustine Faylah	EJF	
11	Andrew B. Doe	NaFAA (Sinoe)	
12	Nerrie Wesseh	Fish Processor	
13	Gladys Wesseh	Chairlady Fish Procesor	
14	Sylvanus Weah Jr.	Fishing Chief	
15	Deecee L Browne	Liberty Radio Sinoe	lincoln2g7@gmail.com
16	Andrew Kabah	EJF	
17	Caroline Gensee	OKFM	corolinegen541gmail.com
18	Amb. George Kingsley	APA	
19	Chris S. Jahblah	Radio Butaw	
20	Lorraine G. Mennoh	Sinoe Women Platform	lorrainemennoh@gmail.com
21	Nadine T. Ajami	LMA	tnadineajami@gmail.com
22	Musu London	EJF	musu.london@ejfoundation.org
23	Alvin S. Jueseah	DoFAS / UL	jueseahas@ul.edu.lr
24	Judoemue Kollie	Daily Observer	judoemuekollie@gmail.com
25	Nimene Doe	Robertsport (CMA)	
26	Nona Deprez	EU Ambassador	
27	Simona Camillii	EU Program Manager	
28	Anthony Williams Jr.	ELBC /LNTV	
29	Gibson. Zaiyee	Spoon TV	ggibsonzaiyee@yahoo.com
30	Alfred Kollie	Public Trust	alfredkolliejr92@gmail.com
31	Katherina W.n Hopkins	BDI / CSO	katherina.hopkins@basa
32	Jerome G. Kanwea	CDO	jerome@cerathdev.org
33	Micheal S.Williams	CDO	
34	Thelma R. Zayzay	CDO	
35	Julius Jeh	OKFM	
36	William Y. Beey	NaFAA	
37	Grace M. Lloyd	CDO	grace@cerathdev.org
38	Solomon N. Danyoe	NaFAA	sdaryoueanafaa.gov.lr
39	Emma M. Glassco	NaFAA	emglassco@nafa.gov.lr
40	Isaac F. Donkor	UNIDO	i.donkor@unido.org
41	Jefferson J.F. Walker Jr.	NaFAA	walker@nafa.gov.lr
42	Derek Adabie	CDO	dadabie@cerathdev.org

43	Leroy N.S Kanmoh	CDO	leroy@cerathdev.org
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Annex III: Gallery



Pre-event interaction between the EU Delegation and the CERATH team



The event MC addressing the audience



Cross-section of participants at the launch



Group picture of event participants



Interaction between NaFAA and the EU ambassador



A participant making a submission during the event



Comments from stakeholders present