

LIBERIA FISHERY GOVERNANCE PROJECT- (LFGP)

BASELINE SURVEY REPORT



CERATH DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CA	Conservation Alliance
CDO	CERATH Development Organization
CI	Conservation International
CMA	Co-Management Association
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMC	Fisheries Monitoring Centre
GBV	Gender-based violence
IEZ	Inshore Exclusion Zone
IUU	Illegal Unreported and Unregulated
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAFA	Liberia Artisanal Fisheries Association
LFGP	Liberia Fisheries Governance Project
NaFAA	National Fisheries and Aquaculture
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural resource mangement
SSF	Small-Scale Fisheries
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Liberia's fisheries sector is critical to its economy and the livelihoods of coastal communities, providing a significant source of income, employment, and food security. Liberia's coastline stretches over 570 kilometres, with a marine fishing ground covering approximately 246,000 km² within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Small-scale fisheries (SSF) dominate the sector. According to NaFAA (2020), 78,453 people depend on the SSF besides those directly employed in the fisheries, with women playing a significant role in post-harvest activities such as processing and marketing.

Despite the sector's potential, it faces several challenges, including weak governance and the marginalization of certain groups, particularly women and people with disabilities (PWDs). Women, despite their prominent role in the fisheries value chain, are excluded from decision-making processes.

In attempts to address these issues, the European Union has committed funds to a consortium led by CERATH Development Organization towards the implementation of the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project (LFGP). The project seeks to enhance good governance, democracy, and accountability across the coastal landscape of Sinoe County. As part of its initial set of activities, the project embarked on a baseline study to contextualize the existing systems and processes employed in fisheries governance within the project landscape. The study sought to, specifically, (i) analyze the local fisheries leadership and governance system, (ii) assess the structures available for fisherfolk participation in governance, and (iii) investigate local CSOs and media support to fisheries governance and sustainable management.

The baseline study utilized a mixed-method, cross-sectional design to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Data were collected from 387 fisherfolk (fishermen and processors), seven civil society organizations (CSO), three media institutions, and five key informants. Methods included the use of semi-structured questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGD), and key informant interviews (KII). The research covered the four coastal districts of Sinoe County: Greenville, Butaw, Dugbe River, and Sanquin. The data collection focused on demographic trends, livelihoods, local fisheries leadership, avenues for governance participation, and CSO/media involvement in fisheries concerns.

Key findings from the study touched on the following:

- **Fisherfolk Demographics and Livelihoods:** Women, representing 48% of fisherfolk respondents, were engaged in post-harvest activities, such as fish processing and marketing, while the men were largely engaged in fishing. The vast majority (96%) of fisherfolk relied solely on fishing for their livelihood, with only 4% of fisherfolk being involved in alternative income activities. Access to financial services was severely limited, with all respondents self-financing their fisheries operations.
- **Governance and Participatory Structures:** Most communities operated recognized governance systems led by fishing or sea chiefs and their all-male cabinets. These structures were elitist and non-inclusive, with only canoe owners and captains participating in governance. Accountability mechanisms were restrictive, with no avenues for general fisherfolk to hold leadership accountable. Additionally, the general fisherfolk had no avenues to directly influence decision-making.
- **Awareness and Institutional Capacity for CMA:** Only 10% of fisherfolk were aware of the Co-Management Association (CMA) concept. Among CSOs, only one (the Liberian Artisanal Fisheries Association (LAFA)) was familiar with CMA, and none had the capacity to support its establishment. Media institutions had no awareness of the concept.
- **Local CSO and Media Contributions to Fisheries:** Seven CSOs were identified, all based in Greenville District, with programming limited to the district. Their focus areas included gender, youth, and natural resources, but fisheries was missing, except for LAFA. Similarly, media entities lacked specialized programming on fisheries, with their efforts (towards fisheries) limited to the relay of pertinent information from NaFAA to fisherfolk. Nonetheless, both CSOs and media expressed willingness to support the establishment of a CMA in Sinoe County.
- **Baseline Against Project Indicators:** At the time of assessment, none of the project indicators (impact, outcome, and output levels) had recorded measurable achievements in Sinoe County. There was no existing CMA in Sinoe, no active civil society engagement in fisheries governance, and no media campaigns or collaborations addressing fisherfolk rights or inclusive resource governance.

In line with the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- **Establishing CMAs** with inclusive leadership that integrates women and marginalized groups. The traditional governance structures should be leveraged towards this end.
- **Capacity building** for CSOs and media to enable them to serve as effective governance actors.
- **Promoting financial inclusion** through community-based models like VSLAs tailored to last-mile communities.
- **Awareness campaigns and adult education**, particularly targeting women to enhance their governance participation.
- **Gender equity initiatives** to dismantle traditional barriers in fisheries governance.
- **Policy and infrastructure development** to support governance and post-harvest activities.
- **Robust monitoring frameworks** to track implementation and measure socio-economic impacts.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Liberia Fisheries Sector Overview

Globally, marine resources play a vital role in coastal nations' social and economic sustainability. This is illustrated through the Sustainable Development Goal number 14, ardent to 'life below water' and the global focus on the 'blue economy' (Wour and Mabon 2022), of which the Republic of Liberia is not an exception. Liberia is located within the east-central Atlantic region of the Gulf of Guinea. The Country's coastline is estimated at 579 km (Jueseah et al., 2022), with major demersal and pelagic fishery resources and fishing ground covering 246,000 km² (Benoit et al., 2020) within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (FAO County Profile, LBR). Of the 15 counties of Liberia, 9 are coastal hosting around 58% of the country's population¹. Liberia's fishing area extends from the shrimp-rich Shebro grounds bordering Sierra Leone in the west to the Cavalla River Basin bordering Côte d'Ivoire in the east and the tuna fishing grounds extending out into the Atlantic Ocean (WCPFC 2021).

The small-scale fisheries (SSF) and the industrial fisheries are conducted in the coastal and offshore waters, using multiple fishing craft and methods (MRAG 2014; Chu et al, 2017; Jueseah et al, 2020). The SSF mainly comprise two fleet groups- the local Kru and Fanti from Ghana (Jueseah 2022). The Kru fleet, consisting mostly of non-motorized (paddles and sails) canoes varying between 12 to 33 ft long with a crew of 1-4, broadly deploy handlines and gillnets targeting shallow-water demersal and deep-water demersal stocks (Ssentongo 1987). The Fanti fleet, mostly operated by migrant fishermen from Ghana, consists of larger open wooden boats ranging from 15 to 71 ft long generally propelled by outboard or inboard engines with 4-26 crew (Chu et al, 2017; Jueseah et al, 2021). Fantis mainly employ ring nets and target small pelagic stocks. Men and women play different roles in the SSF in Liberia (EJF 2023). Pre-harvest (such as repairing fishing gear and equipment) and harvest activities are dominated by men, while women are dominantly involved with post-harvest activities including processing, preservation, and marketing (Torell et al., 2015). The role of women is vital in ensuring food and nutrition security as well as the generation of household income.

The industrial fisheries comprise the coastal trawl and offshore large pelagic (tuna) fishery (MRAG 2013; Ministry of Agriculture 2014). The coastal trawl fishery consists of trawlers that

¹ [Enhancing the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities in Sinoe County of Liberia | UNDP Climate Change Adaptation \(adaptation-undp.org\)](#). Accessed 10.19.2024.

deploy mid-water and bottom trawls targeting the shallow- and deep-water demersal species as well as shrimps (MRAG 2013; Jueseah et al, 2020). The trawlers are owned by foreigners mainly from Europe (e.g., Spain, Greece, Russia.) and China, who operate through joint ventures with Liberian registered fishing agencies (MRAG 2013; Jueseah et al, 2020). The offshore tuna fishery comprises mostly large tuna vessels that deploy multiple fishing methods including purse seines, longlines, and poles and lines largely targeting tropical tuna and tuna-like species all year round in Liberia's EEZ (Benoit et al., 2020).

In 2010, the Liberian Government established a six-nautical-mile (nm) inshore exclusion zone (IEZ) to protect the SSF and to allow the commercial fishery resources to rebuild (Chu et al, 2017; Jueseah et al, 2021). Since then, the Kru and Fanti boats have had exclusive access up to six nm offshore, although they also may fish further out. In 2017, Executive Order No. 84 was issued by the Liberian Government to reduce Liberia's Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) from six to three nautical miles which is reserved for artisanal and semi-industrial fishing activities (Executive Order 2017). However, this was not approved so Liberia's IEZ remains unchanged.

In the Liberian economy, the fishing industry plays a major role. Fisheries are a prime source of food and nutritional security, where fish provides 65% of the animal protein consumed with average annual consumption per capita of 6 kg². Despite fish being the major source of animal protein in the diet of Liberians, the country remains a net importer of fish with its 579km coastline. The average annual importation of fish in Liberia between 2014 and 2020 was estimated at 33,116 tons compared to an average annual export of 123 tons (Fisheries Act 2017). Today, the fisheries sector, which consists of 86% small-scale fishers, directly employs 33,000 fishers and around 78,000 people indirectly, provides revenues and foreign exchange for the government, accounting for about 10% of GDP (Ministry of Agriculture 2014; NaFAA 2020; Jueseah et al, 2020). Fishers within SSF are predominantly Liberian, estimated at around 80%, of which 60 % are females (Jueseah et al., 2020), while the rest are foreigners from Ghana, Togo, Senegal, and Ivory Coast. The fishing industry is regarded as a buffer for many jobless young Liberians because of the high rate of unemployment and the open access situation of the SSF (Togba 2008; Belhabib et al. 2016). While the fishing industry has great potential to contribute to the country's economy, food security and livelihood, the fishery resources are not accruing to the economy and food security as would otherwise be

² | [Liberia - Fishery and Aquaculture Country Profiles \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/fishery/countryprofiles/details/countryprofile.do?country=LBR). Accessed 10.19.2024.

expected. BNF (2014) posits that efforts such as the rehabilitation of fish stocks and improved fisheries governance will be critical to maximize the sector's contributions.

While the coastal SSF is generally free entry to all, industrial coastal and offshore fisheries are strictly regulated (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019; EJJ 2023). The SSF sector, as is the case elsewhere, is characterized by unsustainable fishing practices, with excess fishing effort and illegal fishing practices such as the use of monofilament nets, dynamite fishing, and beach seining, among others, driving overexploitation (EJJ 2023). SSF fishing efforts, between 2004 and 2016, increased by nearly nine-fold, a figure expected to grow further (Jueseah et al, 2021; EJJ 2023). The general lack of control and management in the SSF has had implications for the sustainability of Liberia's fishery resources (EJJ 2023). Collaborative or co-management, because of the inherent challenges of managing SSF, has surfaced in recent years as a potential alternative governance approach to SSF management and has been accepted by the Liberian Government as a way forward for SSF (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019; EJJ 2023).

Co-management may be defined as "a relationship between a resource-user group and another organization or entity (usually a government agency) for fisheries management in which some degree of responsibility and/or authority is conferred to both parties (EJJ 2023). The Collaborative Management Association (CMA) approach recognizes the participation of fishers' and empowers them to become active members in fisheries management, balancing rights and responsibilities and working in partnership with the government (Pomeroy and Rivera-Guieb, 2005). Fishers, fisheries managers, and stakeholders have embraced the CMA concept as it provides a bottom-to-top approach, which is an effective alternative to the top-down approach in fisheries management (EJJ 2023). In Liberia, The CMA offers the opportunity for a shared responsibility between the government represented by the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) and resource users (fisherfolks or fishing communities) in marine resource management.

Since 2011, the Government of Liberia, collaborating with its development partners, such as the European Union (EU), World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Conservation International CI, and Environmental Justice Foundation (EJJ), has established six functional co-management associations (CMAs) in six of the nine coastal counties. One CMA is serving both Bomi and Montserrado counties³, two in Grand Cape Mount, one in Margibi,

³ The two counties were constituted into a single CMA due to the short coastline shared by both. Bomi has two landing sites, while Montserrado has seven

one in Grand Bassa, and one in Grand Kru. While progress has been made regarding the setup of CMAs, three coastal counties — Sinoe, Maryland, and River Cess — are yet to have an established CMA.

1.2 Structure (Governance) of the Fisheries Sector

The overall objective of the Liberian fisheries management system is to ensure the long-term sustainable utilization of the fisheries resources and associated environments for the benefit of Liberia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019, section 2.1). Today, the legal framework supporting the Liberian fisheries sector are the Natural Resources Law (1958), the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority Act (2017), the Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Development Law (2019), the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Strategies (Ministry of Agriculture 2014) and the Revised Fisheries Regulations (2020).

NaFAA, established by an act of legislation in 2017, is an autonomous agency of government solely responsible for fisheries management and development in Liberia (National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority Act 2017; Jueseah 2021). In 2019, the Government amended the 2017 Act, adding thereto the Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Development, giving NaFAA the legal right to regulate the fisheries and aquaculture sector. In the SSF NaFAA is responsible for SSF management and governance, issuance of fishing licenses, and fisheries catch data collection among others (Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Development Law 2019).

NaFAA is being supported by a number of development partners such as the World Bank-funded Liberia Sustainable Management of Fisheries Project (LSMFP), EU-financed Communities for Fisheries Project implemented by EJP and the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project (LFGP) implemented by CERATH Development Organization (CDO) and its partner Conservation Alliance (CA), the SIDA-funded Blue Ocean Program implemented by Conservation International (CI), and the Japanese (JICA)-funded FAO- Thiaroye processing Technique facilities, among others. Development partners' support in the Liberian fisheries sector is aimed at improving fisheries management and governance, as well as the fish value chain (for both SSF and industrial fisheries).

The industrial fisheries are managed through individual vessel catch quotas, fishing licenses, bilateral and private sustainable fisheries partnership agreements and technical measures such as minimum mesh size, area and gear restrictions, among others (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019; Jueseah 2021). Governance of the industrial fisheries is through the 2019 Fisheries and

Aquaculture Management and Development Law, the 2020 revised fisheries regulations and the 2017 National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority Act.

The SSF are managed through licensing and fishing rights such as community fishing rights and territorial user rights fisheries (TURFs) as well as other technical measures like minimum size of fish, and gear restrictions, among others (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019). As is the case with industrial fisheries, the SSF is governed by the same legal instruments mentioned above and specific Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) signed between the CMAs and NaFAA. Of note several CMAs have been established by NaFAA and its partners, to support community-led fisheries management (Fisheries Management and Development Law 2019; EU et al. 2020) and this initiative is expected to be scaled up to support the establishment of co-management and co-administration mechanisms between CMAs and the Liberia Artisanal Fishermen Association, a community-based SSF advocacy group (World Bank 2019). The SSF are closely tied to coastal communities and are critical for food security and livelihood as well as the conservation of marine biodiversity.

In Liberia's SSF CMAs act as direct representatives of NaFAA, supporting local fisheries management at scale. In the local communities, there are two distinct leadership structures: one in the towns and another at the beaches. The formal governance system at the town level is led by the Town Chief, who traditionally governs the town's residents. At the SSF landing sites, the traditional governance system is led by the Sea Chief, who oversees the activities of fishermen on the beach (EJF 2023). Sea Chiefs are chosen either by inheritance or elected by the community based on their experience and knowledge. Their governance responsibilities include leading fishing communities, overseeing fishing and related activities (such as chairing fishermen's meetings, establishing local fishing rules, and settling disputes), serving as community representatives for CMAs, and representing fishers at both county and national levels. Sea Chiefs also actively participate in fisheries and hold significant influence within fishing communities (EJF 2023). Despite these separate governance structures, the relationship between the town and beach leadership remains cooperative and mutually supportive (EJF 2023).

1.3 Stakeholders within the Small-Scale Fisheries Sector

Liberia's SSF sector consists of multiple stakeholders at different leadership levels (EJF 2023). The stakeholders within the SSF broadly operate at the national and community levels. While at the national level, NaFAA is the primary stakeholder, the sea chiefs, fishmongers and fish

processors leaders, community-based fisheries organizations, and local leaders are the key stakeholders at the community level. Liberia Artisanal Fisheries Association (LAFA), the CMA and fisheries cooperatives are other influential stakeholders in the SSF governance process.

1.4 The Liberia Fisheries Governance Project

The Liberia Fisheries Governance Project (LFGP) is a three-year European Union-funded project implemented by the CERATH Development Organization (CDO) and its partner Conservation Alliance (CA). The project is being implemented in the coastal districts of Sinoe County, Liberia. The goal of the project is to improve good governance, democracy, and accountability in the coastal landscape of Sinoe County, Liberia. The project is designed to leveraged enhanced capacities and performance of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and media actors to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of fisherfolks in the project areas.

LFGP, by its specific objectives, will ensure that the operational and structural capacities of local CSOs and media agencies are strengthened to promote good governance in the target landscape. Additionally, the project will promote the CMA concept and facilitate its establishment in Sinoe County. Furthermore, LFGP will enhance the participation of marginalized groups in the coastal economy and advocate for sustainable fisheries governance and fisherfolk rights.

The intended outcomes sought by the project include improved fisheries governance and democratic processes that take into account women, youth, and marginalized groups. The outcomes also touch on enhanced protection of fisherfolk's rights regarding the use and management of coastal resources and the creation and sustenance of economic opportunities for marginalized fisherfolk. LFGP, which has a 3-year timeline, runs from January 2024–December 2026.

1.5 Goal and Objectives of the Baseline Research

As part of the project's first-line activities, CDO conducted a baseline analysis of Sinoe County's fisheries landscape, which consists of four coastal districts: Sanquin, Butaw, Greenville, and Dugbe. The baseline survey is intended to provide a deep understanding and establish the status quo relating to the local fisheries governance system prior to the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project.

The goal of the baseline research was to contextualize the existing systems and processes employed in fisheries governance within Sinoe County. The specific objectives of the research were the following:

- To analyse the local fisheries leadership and governance system within the target landscape
- To assess the structures available for fisherfolk participation in fisheries governance
- To investigate the support from local CSOs and media entities towards fisheries governance & sustainable management

1.6 LFGP Indicators

In as much as the baseline study sought to establish the status quo relating to fisheries governance within Sinoe County, the study and its objectives were further informed by the project's indicators. The study also sought to provide relevant baseline information for the project's pre-defined indicators (at the impact, outcome, and output levels). The realization of these sets of information will provide the project with a starting point to measure its contributions to fisheries governance, particularly in Sinoe County. Table I highlights the project's indicators.

Table I: LFGP indicators

Level	Intervention Area	Indicator
Impact	Contribution to improved good governance, democracy, and accountability in Liberia's coastal landscape.	# of coastal counties participating in local governance through CMAs
		% increase in avenues for youth and women participation in local governance in coastal communities
Outcome	Enhanced capacities of target local CSOs and media as viable actors of good democratic governance.	# of grassroots CSOs supported to be viable through EU funding
		# of media agencies supported to be viable through EU funding
Outcome	Strengthened capacities of local CSOs in the promotion of collaborative management association (CMA) for inclusive resource governance, and safeguarding rights of marginalized fisher folks.	# of grassroots CSOs with improved capacities on CMA formation and sustainability through EU funding
Outcome	Increased participation of youth, women, and other marginalized groups in the local coastal	# of youth, women and other marginalized groups participating in the local coastal

	economy through support to CSOs.	economy through EU funding support (disaggregated by age, disability and sex)
Outcome	Enhanced capacities and role of the media in the promotion of inclusive and sustainable coastal governance and rights.	# of media agencies promoting inclusive and sustainable governance through EU funding support
Output	Sensitization and training sessions on the CMA model organized for the target CSOs	# of grassroots CSOs trained
Output	Communities supported with CMA establishment	# of communities supported
		Successful establishment of CMAs within the fishing communities, including the number of CMAs established and their functional status.
Output	CSOs trained and equipped on livelihood skills to impact fisherfolks including youth and women	# of grassroots CSOs trained and equipped
Output	Collaborations established between CSOs and media agencies	Nature of collaboration between target civil society actors and media agencies in the enhancement of fisherfolk rights
Output	Joint sensitization drive organized under the "fisherfolk rights and sustainable governance" advocacy campaign	# of advocacy campaigns organized

1.7 How the Report is Structured

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of the local fisheries governance system currently in place within the research landscape. The report is categorized into five sections. The report commences with the “*Background*” (Section 1), which provides information on the Liberian fisheries sector, the project, and the study’s objectives. The background is followed by the “*Methodology*” employed in the study (contained in Section 2). The “*Results and Discussions*” of the study follow suit and are contained in Section 3. Section 4 provides the “*Synthesis of Project Baseline Information*”, which is drawn from the study’s findings. The report culminates with the study’s “*Conclusion and Recommendations*” (captured in Section 5).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Description of Study Areas

Sinoe, a coastal county located in the southeast of Liberia, has a population of 151,149 people (LISGIS 2022) and 17 districts out of which four (i.e. Greenville, Butaw, Dugbe River, and Sanquin Statutory districts) are fishing districts. As a coastal county, it relies largely on fishing as a primary source of livelihood for many of its residents. In Sinoe, local fishers conduct fishing activities in marine and freshwater, as well as aquaculture. Fisheries in Sinoe has the potential to contribute to both economic development and sustainable livelihoods for the residents and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities (PWD).

The coastal districts in Sinoe County contribute largely to the county's economic activities and environmental diversity. These districts house the county's fishing industry, which plays a vital role in providing livelihoods and supporting economic growth.



Figure 1: Map of Sinoe County⁴

⁴ Source: OCHA ROWCA; <https://rowca.humanitarianatlas.org>

2.1.1 Greenville District

Greenville, the capital of Sinoe, serves as the administrative and commercial center for the county. Greenville is situated along the Sinoe River and near the Atlantic Ocean and encompasses various fishing communities. The area features a mix of urban and rural landscapes, with communities engaged in agriculture, fishing, and trade. Along the coast of Sinoe, Greenville serves as a key hub for fishing activities.

2.1.2 Butaw District

Butaw is a district located in Sinoe County, known for its coastal and riverine environments. It includes several fishing communities along the coast and near river estuaries. Butaw has a rich biodiversity, with mangrove forests, river systems, and marine habitats. The district's economy is centered around fishing, subsistence farming, and small-scale trade. Communities in Butaw rely on natural resources for livelihoods, including fishing and agriculture.

2.1.3 Dugbe River District

Dugbe District is situated along the Dugbe River which is a prominent river in Sinoe County, originating inland and flowing into the Atlantic Ocean. Agriculture and fishing are key economic activities within the district. The Dugbe River basin supports diverse ecosystems and habitats. The district is home to fishing communities that rely on both riverine and coastal ecosystems for their livelihoods.

2.1.4 Sanquin Statutory District

Sanquin Statutory District is a coastal area that has several fishing communities engaged in artisanal fishing. The district's proximity to the Atlantic Ocean offers access to diverse marine resources. Sanquin Statutory District is also notable for its significant mangrove forest ecosystems, which contribute to coastal biodiversity and fisheries. Fishing is a primary livelihood for the coastal communities in Sanquin. The area is known for its natural beauty and ecological importance, including coastal wetlands and estuaries.

2.2 Study Design and Approach

The study employed a cross-sectional design, which is beneficial for examining or analyzing a project area (or particular population) at a specific point in time (Wang and Cheng, 2020). This design is well-suited for baseline studies, as it allows the project to assess the current

state of the environment and use this information to guide implementation and planning (Setia, 2016).

To ensure comprehensive data collection, the study utilized a mixed-method research approach. This involved combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather and analyze data from respondents. The integration of these methods allowed for a more complete and holistic understanding of the project environment (Bryman, 2006).

2.3 Sampling and Sample Size

The population of interest for the study included all fisherfolk and all local CSOs and media entities within the research landscape.

Fisherfolk respondents were drawn from 13 communities across the four coastal districts: Greenville, Butaw, Sanquin, and Dugbe. The selection of the communities was done using a multi-tiered approach. The fishing communities were grouped in order of the study's districts and community selection was made on that basis. The grouping was to ensure and provide a very representative picture by incorporating elements of each of the four districts into the study. The study's communities were subsequently settled on based on convenience (i.e., ease in reaching these communities).

Table 2: Sampled communities

District	Community
Greenville	Downtown*
	Red Hill
	Seebeh*
Dugbe	Fishtown
	Settra Kru
Butaw	Pumkpo
	Menwah
	Dorbor
	Gbakloh-Geekloh*
Sanquin	Baffur Bay
	Bame Town*

	Panwhan*
	Jlateh Town

*Communities where FGDs were held

Furthermore, convenience sampling technique was used to engage fisherfolk respondents for the study. The fisherfolk (in the sampled communities) were engaged in the study based on their availability and willingness to participate; hence, the use of convenience sampling. The entire population of local CSOs and media agencies (within the research landscape) were engaged for the study. For these organizations, their total number was easy to work with; as such, the project targeted the entire population.

Additionally, five experts in the study's topics of interest were purposively sampled and engaged in key informant interviews (KII). The key informants, due to their subject-matter expertise, were deliberately targeted for the study; hence, the use of purposive sampling. The key informants consisted of the NaFAA county inspector, a fishing chief, and officers from Conservation International, Environmental Justice Foundation, and the Liberia Sustainable Fisheries Management Project.

Focus group discussions (FGD) were carried out in five of the 13 communities; these communities were conveniently selected (on basis on their availability for the session) across the respective districts. Communities selected for the FGD were Panwhan, Bame Town, Down Town, Sebeh, and Gbakloh (indicated in Table 2)

The sample size of fisherfolk respondents was determined using an online sample size estimator⁵, and was based on the following parameters: confidence level (95%), margin of error (5%), population proportion (50%), and an unknown population size⁶. The minimum sample size generated (by the estimator) was 385, which the research team increased to 387.

In all, the study sample was made up of 387 fisherfolk (203 fishermen and 184 fishmongers), seven local CSOs, and three media institutions. Other engaged persons for the study were five key informants (subject-matter experts). The data collection methods used, type of respondents, and number of interviews conducted are summarized in Table 3.

⁵ <https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html?type=I&cl=95&ci=5&pp=50&ps=&x=Calculate>

⁶ There was very little information on the approximate population of fisherfolk in Sinoe County.

Table 3: Summary of sample size information

Respondents	Data collection method	Number or sample size
Fisherfolk	Semi-structured questionnaire	387
Community as a collective	Focus group discussion	5
Local civil society organizations	Semi-structured questionnaire	7
Media agencies	Semi-structured questionnaire	3
Subject-matter experts	Key informant interviews	5

2.4 Data Collection

The study, which was conducted from April to July 2024, had data collected through field surveys, FGDs, and KIs. The study collected both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires designed and administered by the LFGP team. Administering the questionnaires was done with the support of the NaFAA county officers and recruited enumerators. The semi-structured questionnaires were digitally based, using the KoBoCollect application. The questionnaires were administered in Koloqua, the local rendition of the English language and popular across the study area.

The data collected include demographic information (such as age, sex, and educational level), alternative livelihoods, local fisheries governance setup, accountability systems, participation mechanisms, and CSOs and media roles.

The FGDs carried out were to source general community feedback and sentiment on some areas of research interest. The FGDs were structured to have representation from all key groups of interest within the community-level fisheries setup, such as fishermen (canoe owners, captains, and crew), fishmongers, youth, members of the fishing chief's cabinet, and PWDs (where applicable). Participants for the FGDs ranged from 15 to 30. Discussions were guided by open-ended questions contained in a pre-developed discussion guide. The respective discussion points were afforded ample time to be discussed at length. Efforts were made for active participation from the respective sections of fisherfolk present. Interesting points raised, outside the discussion guide, were explored further.

Additionally, further information and clarity on issues raised during the research were obtained from the key informants. Secondary data were sourced from relevant institutions, such as the NaFAA Sinoe County Office and the local CSOs and media entities. Relevant unpublished data were also obtained from these institutions.

2.5 Data Analysis

Survey data were exported from Kobo Collect to MS Excel and used to produce summary statistics, such as averages, ranges, frequencies and/or percentages and presented in appropriate tables and graphs. The frequency and percentage analyses were used to describe the total number and percentage of respondents that answered the different interview questions. The data were used to describe the socio-economic characteristics of fishermen processors/fishmongers, CSO, and media agencies in the project area. Content analysis was employed to analyze the primary qualitative information obtained from the KIs, in which themes from the recorded and transcribed notes were identified, compared, and contrasted for each category, and then implications about the content of the themes crucial for the study. Content analysis suits qualitative data which can consist of direct quotations from respondents about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009).

2.6 Reliability, validity, and ethical considerations

To ensure the collection of quality data for analysis, the study was guided by scientific research principles and processes in data collection and analysis. The data collection tools were developed by the project team. The questionnaires were pre-tested in a similar environment/condition to the sampled communities. Insights gained as a result of the pre-test were integrated during the revision of the tools, which enhanced the validity, reliability, and relatability of the tools. Before the data collection stage, enumerators were recruited, trained, and made to sign a field engagement contract with codes of conduct, then deployed thereafter. The enumerator training was very detailed specifying the rules of engagement and techniques in administering the questions. The enumerators were strictly mandated to obtain the informed consent of respondents before administering the questionnaire. All questions were reviewed extensively to remove ambiguity and allow for easy administration.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the research findings conducted across the project landscape. The findings are categorized into demographic information, livelihood elements, local fisheries governance, participatory processes, and support of local CSOs and media entities towards fisheries. Presentation of the findings is via graphs, charts, and tables.

3.1 Demographic Information

3.1.1 Gender Distribution

Out of the 387 fishers surveyed in Sanquin, Greenville, Dugbe, and Butaw, 52% were fishermen while 48% were fishmongers/fish processors (Figure 2). Looking at the gender distribution, it suggests that women's participation in the local fisheries sector is almost at par with that of their male counterparts. With the strong gender divide within fisheries (which sees women active only in the postharvest sub-sector), this observation provides a profound insight into the potential of the sector to cater to large numbers of sustainable livelihoods for women within coastal landscapes. If harnessed well, the sector could be the lifeline to feasibly graduate large scores of coastal women out of extreme poverty.

Figure 3 depicts the distribution of fishermen and fishmongers interviewed (for the study) across the various districts. Fishmongers within the county were largely concentrated within the urban fishing district (i.e. Greenville), being more in Greenville (95) than the other three districts combined (89). The observation could be explained by the strong economic prospects in fish trade offered by urban centres. This explanation is captured by Brickhill (2020), who points out that fishmongers usually go to rural and remote fishing districts to gather (buy) fish and relocate to bustling marketing places to sell these commodities.

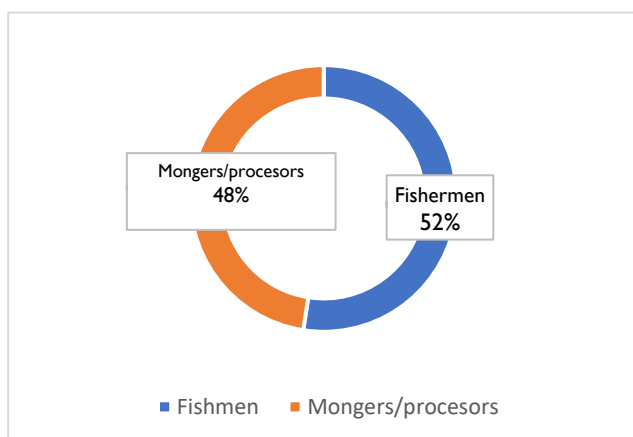


Figure 2: Percentage of the fishermen vs mongers/processors

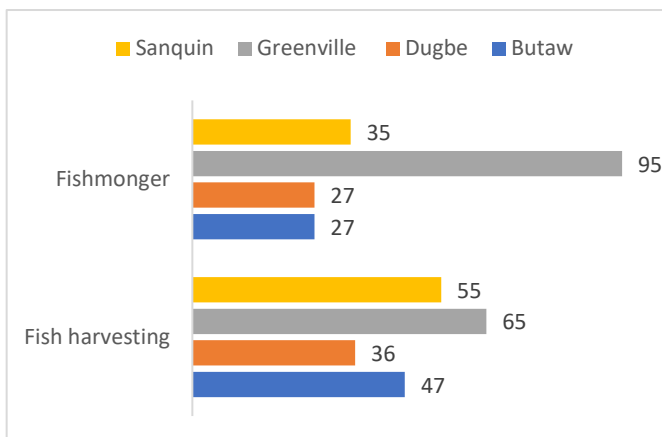


Figure 3: Number of fishermen vs mongers per district

3.1.2 Age of Respondents

According to the findings, 68% of the fisherfolk interviewed were between 36 and 60 years old, compared to 26% who were between the ages of 18 to 35 (Figure 4). With a whopping 94% of respondents being within the age bracket of 18-60, the fisheries sector is currently being catered to by a vibrant and active workforce. However, having only 26% of fisherfolk between the ages of 18-35 may suggest a situation where the youth population (within fishing communities) do not find SSF attractive and worthwhile.

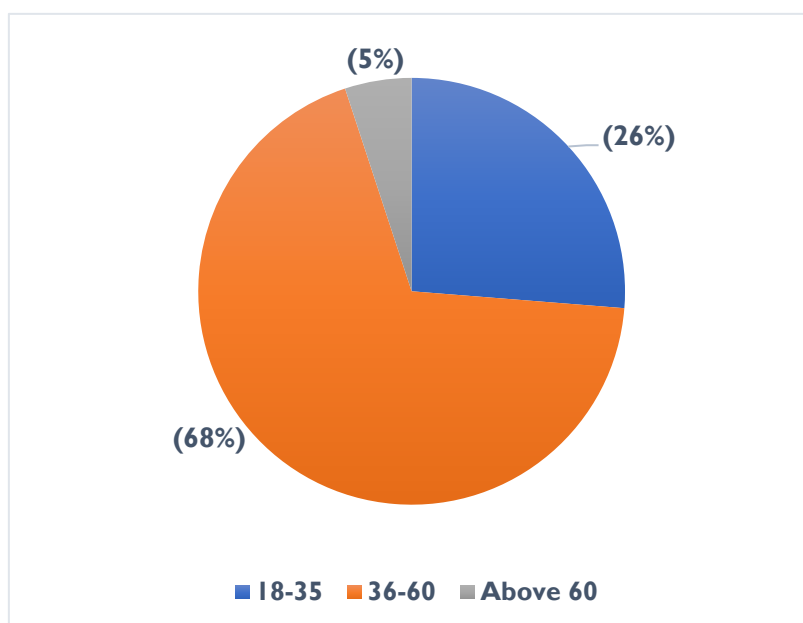


Figure 4: Percentage distribution of fisherfolk age ranges

3.1.3 Educational Levels of Respondents

Results reveal that 52% of the respondents had no formal education compared to 48% who had obtained some level of formal education (Figure 5). Out of the 48% with some level of formal education, primary school education dominated with 30%, followed by secondary education with 17% and college education with 0.78% (Figure 5). The low levels of formal education may hamper communal receptiveness to behavioural change and the adoption of new concepts and practices.

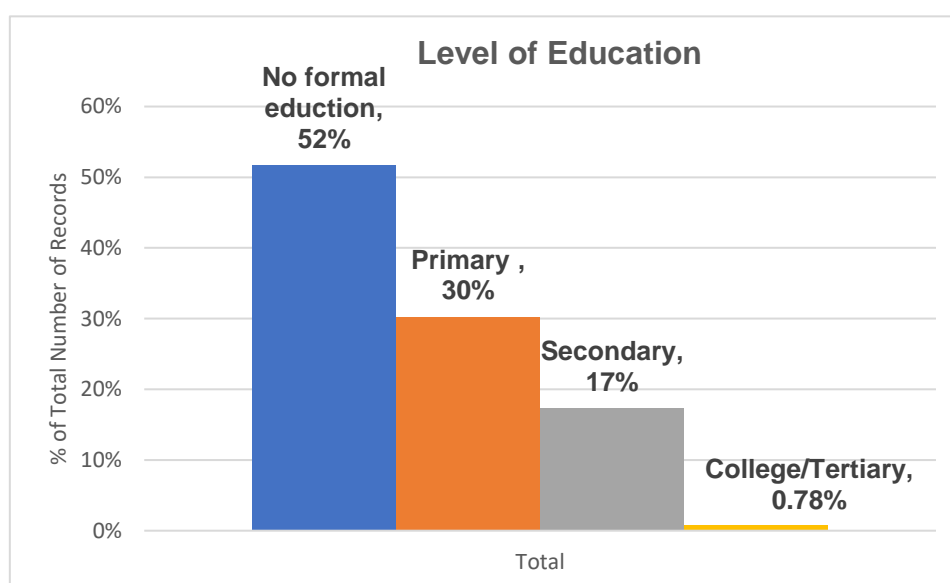


Figure 5: Level of education of fisherfolk

3.1.4 Gender and Education

Juxtaposing gender with the educational levels recorded, findings show that 66% of fisherfolks with no formal education were female, while 39% with no formal education were male (Figure 6). Results also show that 23% of male fisherfolks have completed secondary education, while only 11% of females have done the same. For all scenarios, women were at the lower end of the educational spectrum. The low levels of formal education, particularly among female fishmongers, may limit their capacity to fully participate in governance and resource management initiatives, underscoring the need for targeted capacity-building efforts.

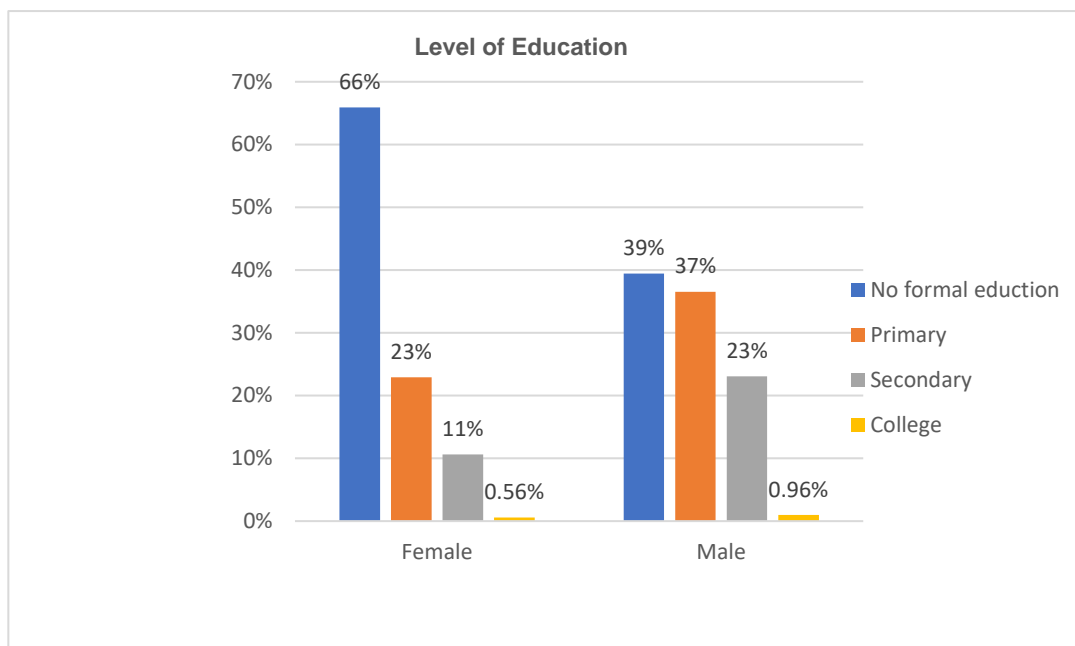


Figure 6: Educational levels between male and female fisherfolk

3.1.5 Fisherfolk with Disability

The findings from the survey also revealed that of all the fisherfolks interviewed, 6% reported having some sort of disability, while 94% had no form of disability. This finding points out that PWDs are, in one way or the other, able to participate in the sector and earn a livelihood from fisheries activities.

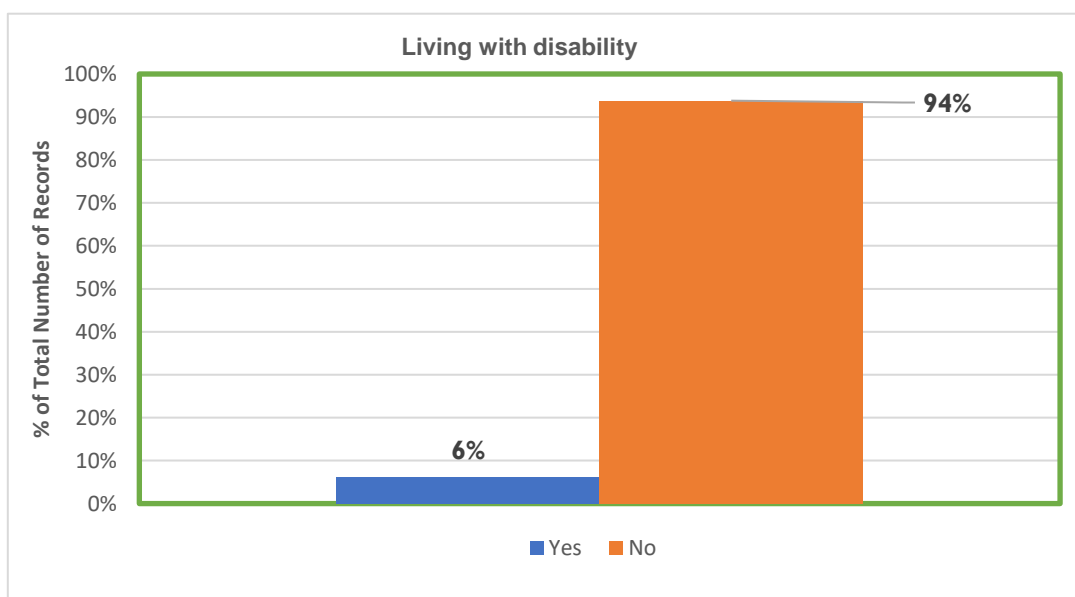


Figure 7: Fisherfolk living with disability

3.2 Livelihood Support Elements

3.2.1 Prevalence of Alternative Livelihoods

Results show that 96% of fisherfolk's (in the surveyed area) sole source of income in the past 12 months was the fisheries value chain, as opposed to 4% who stated they had alternate means of income other than fisheries-related activities (Figure 8). The alternative economic activities engaged in by the fisherfolk were farming (cassava and vegetables), palm oil production, and coconut oil production.

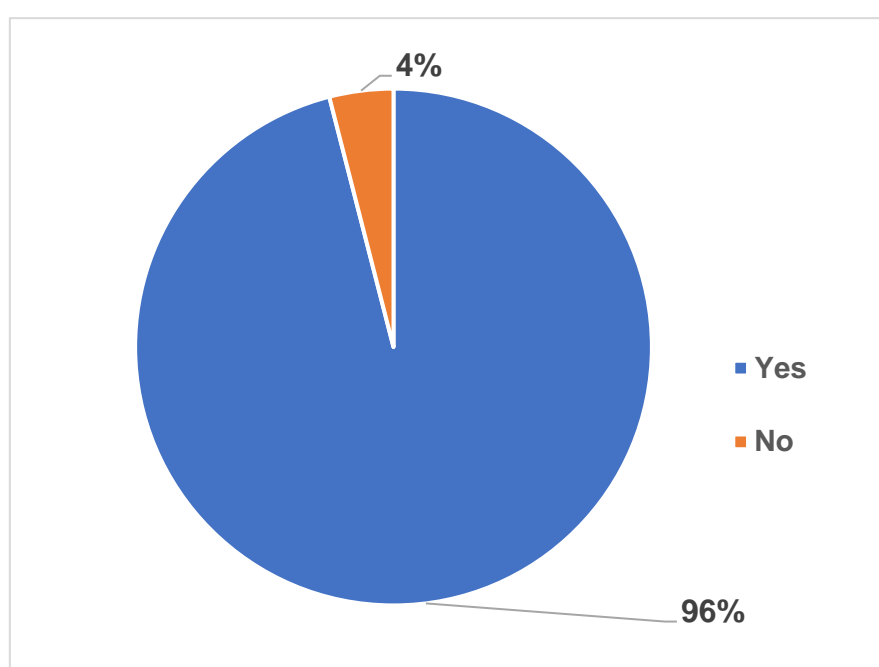


Figure 8: Fisherfolk with fisheries as sole economic activity

The low incidence of alternative livelihoods amongst fisherfolk is indicative of a heavy reliance on fisheries, which does not sit well for purposes of coastal biodiversity and conservation. There is currently little data to suggest declining fish stock within Liberian waters; however, heavy reliance on fisheries could expeditiously precipitate such a decline, particularly when fisherfolk population and fishing effort increase drastically. Additionally, this heavy reliance places fisherfolk in a vulnerable position where they are unable to withstand shocks such as climate change and lean seasons. The socioeconomic conditions of fisherfolk will be greatly worsened if these shocks are to occur and/or persist.

3.2.2 Access to Finance for Fisheries Activities

The study found that fisherfolk in the project landscape had limited access to financial services such as loans, insurance, and other resources for risk management. All of the respondents interviewed stated that they self-financed their fishing activities. Nonetheless, 9.5% of fishmongers (though not beneficiaries of the grant) in the Greenville District attested that Conservation International through its Blue Ocean Program provided grants. The grant was given to fisheries cooperative members who were actively engaged in fish mongering or processing. On the other hand, responses from one of the communities pointed to the presence of a microfinance institution, BRAC Liberia, which offered a special facility to women via groups. BRAC offered this facility to women groups with each member allowed to access, at least, 25,000 Liberian dollars (approx. USD 128).

Fisheries actors, having to depend solely on self-financing, are constrained heavily in attending to the needs of their trade. This occurrence may be largely responsible for the subsistence level of their business operations.

However, it was refreshing to identify external financing sources for fisherfolk though little. Hopefully, many fisherfolk, particularly women, will get to access these financing options to procure fisheries assets, expand their businesses, contribute significantly to the coastal economy, and enhance their socio-economic conditions.

The presence of the microfinance institution was observed in the more urban part (Greenville) of the study area. The concern here is, “*How can last-mile communities be served?*”; the project landscape consists of several last-mile communities. For such localities, the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) model or similar community-based financing schemes may be the most cost-effective and low-maintenance options for accessing finance.

3.3. Analysis of Local Fisheries Governance

3.3.1 Fisherfolk Knowledge of the CMA Model

The study further sought to assess the respondents' familiarity with the CMA approach. Results show that only 10% of fisherfolk knew the CMA model, with 90% being unaware (Figure 9). This 10% attributed their knowledge of the concept to some donor-funded interventions and family and friends.

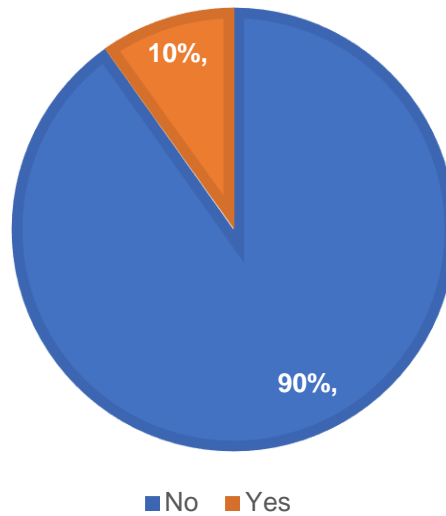


Figure 9: Fisherfolk knowledge of the CMA model

Having a majority of fisherfolk being unaware of the CMA concept implies that proponents of the project will have to invest much effort in its promotion. Project proponents will need to execute an extensive campaign towards promoting the concept and making it a household name within the coastal stretch of Sinoe County. These efforts will be necessary to facilitate a positive wide-scale reception of the fisheries governance approach.

3.3.2 Existing Fisheries Leadership and Governance Structure

It was identified that 77% of the respondent communities had an organized fisheries leadership structure. This structure, recognized by NaFAA, comprised the fishing chief (also called sea chief) and his cabinet of fishermen. On the other hand, a minority (23%) had no such arrangement. For these communities, the paramount chief or community chairman exercised caretaker responsibilities over fisheries issues.

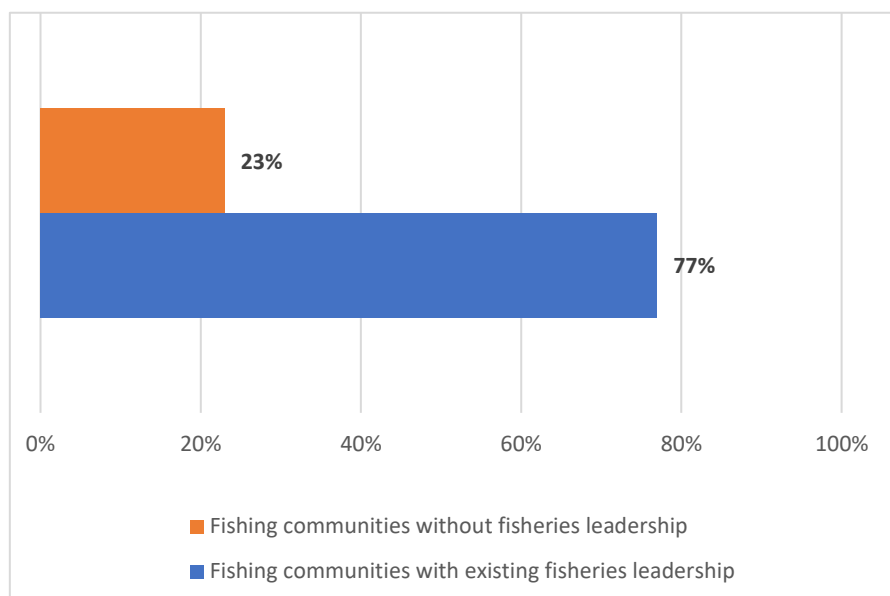


Figure 10: Communities with fisheries governance structure

When selected, the fishing chief constituted his cabinet to assist him in leadership. The cabinet consisted of a secretary, advisors, a treasurer, and a chaplain⁷. These positions were occupied by men only. The fishing chief and his cabinet of fishermen were the primary persons managing fishing activities at the beaches as observed by EJJ (2023). According to EJJ (2023), fishing or sea chiefs are the main instruments of authority in fisheries management and are responsible for almost all local fishing rules.

To become a fishing chief, one must be of an honourable disposition, have a profound fishing experience (at least 10 years)⁸, and have fishing assets. Additionally, he must have a good understanding of fishing regulations and be a local from the community with a good working relationship with other fishermen and the community. Unless there are cases of violation of power and privileges, a fishing chief will retain his position till death or resignation. The fishing chief is appointed by an elite group of fishermen (this elite group is discussed further in Section 3.4.1).

Traditionally, women are not permitted to hold the position of fishing chief or constitute members of the fishing chief's cabinet. This occurrence is rooted in the tradition of women not being allowed to go fishing, which highlights the strict gender divide of fishery roles. As such, it is believed that the woman cannot exercise authority over fishing issues. However,

⁷These titles may go by varied names in different communities.

⁸ In some communities, a candidate should be, at least, 30 years old to be eligible for the office of fishing chief

women within the sector have a parallel, less-prominent structure, headed by a chairlady and exercises oversight of all fish processing and mongering activities.

Furthermore, it was found that communities without a local fisheries governance system were so because they had less than 10 canoes (or canoe owners) operating along their respective coastlines. According to the NaFAA⁹, a locality should have, at least, 10 functional canoes to be recognized as a fishing village. In meeting this requirement, the locality will be worthy of appointing a fishing chief or running a localized governance setup. It was pointed out that NaFAA (county office) had on a couple of occasions urged adjoining communities within this category to come together and be organized as one locality. Doing so will enable them to satisfy the minimum requirement (of 10 functional canoes) for constituting a governance setup. These communities have held back largely because they were inward-looking.

3.3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The fishing chiefs, with their cabinets, are responsible for managing fishing activities and enforcing fishing regulations, among others within their respective jurisdictions. To help manage the people and fisheries resources within their respective communities, the fisheries leadership have the mandate to

- Call for general meetings to discuss matters of fisheries concern
- Settle disputes
- Ensure compliance with fishing laws
- Impose fines for fisheries infractions
- Assist NaFAA in collecting income tax from fishermen
- Maintain an up-to-date record of canoes at their landing beaches.

3.3.4 Accountability Mechanism

Response received from the respective communities pointed to the near absence of accountability systems with the existing governance structure. There were no platforms or avenues for the everyday fisherfolk to hold the leadership structure to account for actions and finances. Additionally, processes for ordinary fisherfolk to repose confidence or otherwise in the leadership, such as via electioneering, were non-existent. However, it was identified that the leadership structure reports to some privileged fisherfolk¹⁰ (who are discussed under

⁹ This information was elicited during the key informant interview with the NaFAA county inspector

¹⁰ Downward accountability was observed here

section 3.3). Furthermore, the leadership structure observes upward accountability to the general fishing chief (who is discussed under section 3.4.4) on actions and revenues raised.

3.3.5 Cooperatives as Instrument for Fisheries Governance

From the study, it was pointed out that NaFAA has been active in the establishment of fishing cooperatives within the landscape to serve as a platform for inclusive fisheries governance. At the time of reporting (for the study), six cooperatives had been formed within Sinoe County (Table 4). Though cooperatives are formed as business units and made up of several like-minded artisanal members, NaFAA intended to leverage these units as instruments for its grassroots operations. The intention has been to organize all fisherfolk into cooperatives towards effective and coordinated engagements with NaFAA (such as distribution of subsidies) and strengthened fisheries governance systems.

From March 2022, NaFAA utilized the cooperatives to distribute assets and tools to fisherfolk. These assets and tools consist of outboard motors, fishing nets, and life jackets. On the other hand, NaFAA has been able to rope the respective fishing chiefs into the cooperative setup in an attempt to position the cooperatives as fisheries governance platforms. Despite this attempt, the intended governance elements are in the nascent stage, yet to gather any momentum, and are non-present.

Table 4: Fishing cooperative across Sinoe fishing districts

No.	Cooperative Name	Location
1	Greenville Fishing Cooperative	Greenville District
2	Sebeh Fishing Cooperative	Greenville District
3	Butaw Fishing Cooperative	Greenville District
4	Sattra Kru Fishing Cooperative	Dugbe District
5	Dugbe Fishing Cooperative	Dugbe District
6	Sanquin Fishing Cooperative	Sanquin District

3.4 Participatory Processes for Fisheries Governance

3.4.1 Actors Participating in the Local Fisheries Governance

Findings from the study indicate that participation in fisheries governance was limited to a select few fisherfolk, who happen to be all male. Only canoe owners and canoe captains were recognized to participate in the governance structure. With this structure, women, youth,

and fishing crew members are roped out of discussions and deliberations on coastal resource management. Though grassroots, the existing governance structure exhibits strong elitist tendencies with access given only to capitalists (canoe owners) and crew heads (canoe captains).

These elite fisherfolk are the group that gets to select the fishing chief. It is worth noting that the fishing chief and his cabinet have to belong to this elite group to stand a chance of being considered for their office. In owning fishing assets (as pointed out in section 3.3.2), inclusive of a canoe, the fishing chief is by default a *bona fide* member of the group.

3.4.2 Sectional Meetings

The fishing chief, his cabinet, and the body of canoe owners and captains constitute the sectional meeting. The fishing chief, at the community level, is rightly referred to as the “*sectional fishing chief*”, further distinguishing the title from that of the general fishing chief.

The sectional meeting is a formal engagement held monthly¹¹ at the community level to deliberate fishing and related issues. Where necessary, emergency meetings could be held intermittently.

The sectional meetings provide a platform for participants to, among other things, (i) take account of accidents, deaths, and other incidents, (ii) disseminate information from NaFAA, (iii) deliberate on emerging concerns, and (iv) account for revenues raised. These meetings do not include the NaFAA county office unless invited.

3.4.3 Exclusion of Women in Coastal Resource Deliberations

Findings revealed that women were markedly excluded from engagements and discussions revolving around coastal and marine resources. This observation was explained to be rooted in a long-standing tradition and its implied inference.

There is a long-standing tradition that women are not allowed to go fishing at sea (as stated in Section 3.3.2), which largely informs the strict gender divide (of livelihood roles) within the Liberian SSF — fish capture is the preserve of men and fish postharvest is that of women.

Inferentially, it is believed that since women have no place on the sea and possess no experience in fishing, they (women) should have no place within the male-themed governance

¹¹ Some communities held sectional meeting twice a month.

structure. This male-themed structure is that which deliberates on coastal resources and their management.

There is a separate and parallel structure for the womenfolk, but that is limited to only fish processing and mongering concerns. Deliberations and contributions to coastal resource management are lost on women fisherfolk. This observation leaves much to be desired, particularly since women fisherfolk tend to be worse impacted when coastal resources are mismanaged.

3.4.4 Fisheries Governance Beyond the Sectional Meeting

The various community-level fisheries governance setups (sectional meetings), within an administrative district, are further organized into a supra-body called the “*general meeting*”, which superintends fishing affairs within the entire district. The general meeting is headed by the general fishing chief, who is appointed by members of the general meeting. The respective sectional fishing chiefs report to and are accountable to the general fishing chief.

Beyond the sectional meetings, several actors and interactions exist that add to fisheries governance. The additional actors, here, consist of the NaFAA county office (headed by the county inspector) and the general fishing chief and his cabinet.

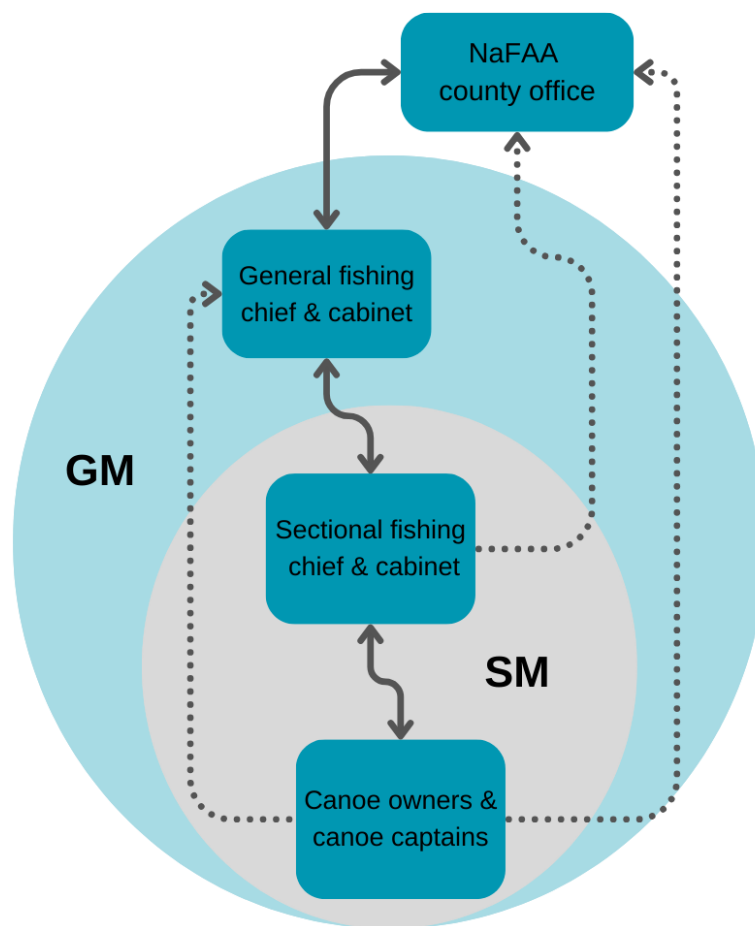
Table 5 details the interactions and communication flow that exist between the actors, whereas Figure 11 visualizes the interactions at play.

Table 5: Interactions and communication flow among actors

Actor	Interactions with other Actors
NaFAA (represented by the county office)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disseminates fisheries-themed information and updates to the general fishing chief, which will subsequently be disseminated downwards
General fishing chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> renders district-level reporting (fishing-related data, activities, revenues, and expenses) and feedback (from fisherfolk) to NaFAA. reports on activities, revenues, and expenses to members of the general meeting relays relevant information from NaFAA to the sectional fishing chief for subsequent dissemination at the community level
Sectional fishing chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> renders upward reporting (fishing-related data, activities, revenues, and expenses) to the general fishing chief

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relays the relevant information, emanating from NaFAA, to fisherfolk • provides downward reporting to the elite group of fishermen on the generation and use of revenues.
Fisherfolk (canoe owners and captains)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in governance discussions and provide feedback on management efforts and interventions to the sectional fishing chief • where these fisherfolk feel their concerns are not been afforded the needed attention by the sectional chief, they may unconventionally relay it to the general fishing chief*. • when engagements with the general fishing chief do not yield much, they may escalate it once again; this time to the NaFAA county office*.

*Unconventional relationship.



Legend



	Structured relationship
	Unconventional relationship
SM	Sectional Meeting
GM	General Meeting

Figure 11: Interactions between various actors within local fisheries governance

Escalations (unconventional relationships or communication flow), as pointed out in Table 5 and Figure 11, are rare and not the norm. Escalations beyond the sectional chief may stem from non-action on a grievance or concern, a grievance with the sectional chief, or poor leadership. On the other hand, escalations beyond the general fishing chief may arise from a perceived non-action to a grievance brought before him.

3.5 CSOs and Media Support to Fisheries Governance

3.5.1 Presence, Priorities, and Governance of CSOs and Media Entities

There were seven CSOs identified to be operating within the project area (Table 6), all of which are situated in Greenville City, the capital of Sinoe County. It was also realized that interventions of the local CSOs were all limited to communities within the Greenville District (Greenville City is located in this district). Interventions of the local CSOs did not extend to the Sanquin, Dugbe, and Butaw districts. This observation was very exclusionary of the three districts and could largely be attributed to convenience on the part of the local CSOs. These three districts are rural and become inaccessible during the rainy season, and for convenience's sake, may be excluded in the design of interventions. These factors aggregate to compound the fate of the inhabitants of the three districts. Inhabitants of these districts get to witness stagnation or decline of their socio-economic lot, which is occasioned by the absence of needed interventions.

Furthermore, the priority areas (areas of focus) of the CSOs were interrogated. The areas of focus ranged from youth empowerment, women's rights and gender-based violence, agriculture and agribusiness, governance, and natural resource management, among others. Details of the priority areas of the respective CSOs are provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Details of CSOs in the study area

Name	District	Area of Focus		Registration Status
		Fisheries	Other	
Sinoe County Women's Platform	Greenville	No	Women's rights and gender-based violence, peacebuilding, and agriculture	Non-profit
BASA Development Initiative	Greenville	No	Agriculture & agribusiness, environment, health and education	Non-profit
Progressive Movement for Transformation and Empowerment	Greenville	No	Youth capacity building, agriculture, and water sanitation & hygiene (WASH)	Non-profit

Community Initiative Against Gender Discrimination	Greenville	No	Governance, natural resource management (NRM), and peacebuilding	Non-profit
National Union Organization of Disable	Greenville	No	Governance, NRM, and agriculture	Non-profit
Young Intellectual for Liberia's Progress	Greenville	No	NRM, agriculture, and WASH	Non-profit
Liberia Artisanal Fisherman Association (LAFA) (Sinoe County Office)	Greenville	Yes	NRM	Non-profit

The study further revealed that three media institutions were operating in Sinoe County (Table 7). These institutions were local radio stations that disseminated information to audiences living in Sinoe and its environs. Of the three institutions, two were located in the Greenville District, whilst one was situated in the Butaw District. The coverage of all three media entities catered to all districts of Sinoe County, and for a particular entity, Radio Butaw, its coverage extended to parts of River Gee, River Cess, and Grand Kru counties. All three radio stations relay some broadcasts from other radio stations in Monrovia. Responses on the geographical coverage bid well for LFGE since it can leverage the media entities to reach its intended audience of coastal communities in Sinoe County.

Broadcast interests of the media entities included business, politics, social issues, and sports reporting (Table 7). Fisheries did not feature as a particular broadcast interest of any of the media entities. This response, alongside some further detail, is discussed in Section 3.5.3.

Table 7: List of media institutions in the study area

Media Institution	District	Frequency	Broadcast Interests	Geographical coverage
Voice of Sinoe Radio	Greenville	88.3FM	Politics, News, Business, Social issues, Sports,	All districts in Sinoe County
Liberty Broadcasting Service (LBS)	Greenville	105.5	Education, Entertainment, Business, Politics, Social issues, Sports	All districts in Sinoe County
Radio Butaw	Butaw	102.3FM	Business, Politics, Social issues, Sports, Agriculture	All districts of Sinoe County and some parts of River Gee, River Cess, and Grand Kru counties

Responses from the institutions noted that all the CSOs and media institutions were governed by a board of directors consisting of 5 to 7 members with a minimum of one female member

on the board. The presence of a board of directors and the deliberate involvement of women (on the boards) was indicative of entities that are appreciative of good governance and affirmative action. This observation is particularly profound since LFGP intends to work and engage with the CSOs and media institutions as proponents and advocates for good governance, democracy, and accountability. The presence of boards of directors posits these institutions as worthy candidates to advocate the goal of the project.

When probed on receipt of “*EU funding towards efforts aligned with institutional good governance*”, all CSOs and media entities answered in the negative, pointing out that no such assistance or support had been received. All institutions pointed to some level of awareness and capacity in good governance; however, financial support geared at such capacity had been from other sources.

3.5.2 CSOs’ Awareness of the CMA Model and Efforts of Fisheries Concern

The findings revealed that none of the CSOs, but one (LAFA), were aware of the CMA approach to fisheries governance, representing 85.7% of the CSOs. When probed further, this single CSO had no capacity or technical know-how to mobilize and constitute a CMA. As communicated in Table 6, all the CSOs, except LAFA, had no programmatic focus on fisheries. Irrespective of fisheries being absent in the priority areas of six CSOs, they mentioned that some of their programmatic focus extended to fisheries actors in Sinoe County, such as awareness of gender-based violence (GBV) and women’s rights, access to finance, and plastic waste management.

Non-awareness or ignorance of the six CSOs to the CMA model is likely explained by the absence of fisheries in their focus areas. Much could not be expected of these CSOs when it came to key concepts relating to fisheries governance and sustainable fisheries management.

On both counts of “*awareness of the CMA model*” and “*fisheries as a programmatic focus*”, LAFA responded in the affirmative. Thus, showing forth a direct correlation between “*fisheries as a programmatic focus*” and “*awareness of the CMA model*” This observation was largely expected and goes on to augment the earlier argument for the six other CSOs’ non-awareness of the model. Advancing and advocating fisherfolk rights and concerns, as done by LAFA, places the institution in a position to be well-informed and knowledgeable about the CMA model as a governance tool.

Despite the absence of “fisheries” in the focus areas and non-awareness of the CMA model, the local CSOs expressed a willingness to take up, advocate, and contribute to fisheries governance if provided with the necessary capacity and resources.

3.5.3 Media’s Awareness of the CMA Model and Efforts of Fisheries Concern

The study further examined media entities' awareness of the CMA model, as well as their involvement in fisheries. None of the three media entities were aware of the CMA model. The media institutions efforts in fisheries, though sparse, mainly consisted of disseminating fisheries-related information from NaFAA. With the right resources (particularly resource persons and information), the media entities indicated their readiness to deepen their efforts on fisheries-related issues.

The media entities, much like the six CSOs discussed above, were not focused on fisheries and were less likely to have encountered a fisheries governance concept like CMA. Further, the existing fisheries-related efforts and readiness to advance fisheries can be consolidated by LFGP and other fisheries stakeholders to promote fisheries governance and fisherfolk rights.

4.0 SYNTHESIS OF PROJECT BASELINE INFORMATION

Beyond the research goal and objectives, the study garnered baseline information on several areas of interest to the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project. The report synthesized the findings of the study to answer relevant project indicators (Table 8); thus, establishing baseline information for the respective indicators.

Table 8: Baseline findings against project's indicators

Level	Intervention Area	Indicator	Baseline Finding
Impact	Contribution to improved good governance, democracy, and accountability in Liberia's coastal landscape.	# of coastal counties participating in local governance through CMAs	6 <i>Currently, there are only six counties with functional CMAs: Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Grand Kru, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Bomi counties.</i> <i>Within these six counties are six CMAs:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montserrado and Bomi share one CMA, • Grand Cape Mount has two CMAs, • and the other three counties have one CMA each
		% increase in avenues for youth and women participation in local governance in coastal communities	0 <i>There are no existent platforms for women, youth, and the average fisherfolk to participate in local fisheries governance.</i> <i>Participation is only reserved for a male-only elite group made up of canoe owners and canoe captains.</i>
Outcome	Enhanced capacities of target local CSOs and media as viable actors of good democratic governance.	# of grassroots CSOs supported to be viable through EU funding	0 <i>None of the local CSOs had received, through EU funding, enhanced capacities as viable actors for good governance.</i>
		# of media agencies supported to be viable through EU funding	0 <i>None of the media entities had received, through EU funding, enhanced capacities as viable actors for good governance.</i>
Outcome	Strengthened capacities of local CSOs in the promotion of collaborative management	# of grassroots CSOs with improved capacities on CMA formation and sustainability through EU funding	0 <i>Most (85.7%) of the local CSOs had no idea of the CMA concept. The only CSO with knowledge of the concept had no capacity to constitute a CMA.</i>

	association (CMA) for inclusive resource governance, and safeguarding rights of marginalized fisher folks.		
Outcome	Increased participation of youth, women, and other marginalized groups in the local coastal economy through support to CSOs.	# of youth, women and other marginalized groups participating in the local coastal economy through EU funding support (disaggregated by age, disability and sex)	0 <i>Fisherfolk were identified to be operating at a subsistence level with restricted participation within the coastal economy. The restricted participation stemmed, largely, from single income streams and limited financing options.</i>
Outcome	Enhanced capacities and role of the media in the promotion of inclusive and sustainable coastal governance and rights.	# of media agencies promoting inclusive and sustainable governance through EU funding support	0 <i>None of the media entities were focused on fisheries-themed elements. Their effort in fisheries was the transmission of fisheries-related information, mainly from NaFAA, to fisherfolk.</i>
Output	Sensitization and training sessions on the CMA model organized for the target CSOs	# of grassroots CSOs trained	0 <i>None of the grassroots CSOs had any training on the CMA model.</i>
Output	Communities supported with CMA establishment	# of communities supported	0 <i>There was no CMA instituted in Sinoe and the communities were largely ignorant of the model.</i>
		Successful establishment of CMAs within the fishing communities, including the number of CMAs established and their functional status.	0 <i>The communities had no capacity to set up a CMA.</i>
Output	CSOs trained and equipped on livelihood skills to impact fisherfolks including youth and women	# of grassroots CSOs trained and equipped	0 <i>None of the grassroots CSOs had proficiency in livelihood skills (such as soap making and baking) and their related skills transfer.</i>
Output	Collaborations established between CSOs and media agencies	Nature of collaboration between target civil society actors and	0 <i>There were no such collaborations existing between the local CSOs and</i>

		media agencies in the enhancement of fisherfolk rights	<i>media entities, particularly since fisheries was not a focus area across board.</i>
Output	Joint sensitization drive organized under the "fisherfolk rights and sustainable governance" advocacy campaign	# of advocacy campaigns organized	0 <i>There were no such arrangements in place, particularly since fisheries was not a focus area across board.</i>

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The baseline survey conducted for the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project (LFGP) offers critical insights into the fisheries governance structures, participation mechanisms, and the role of civil society and media in Sinoe County. In terms of fisheries governance, the results revealed that local fisheries leadership is predominantly male-dominated, with fishing chiefs and their cabinets playing central roles in governance.

Women and marginalized groups are largely excluded from participatory and decision-making processes. The participatory structures are elitist, restricting participation to canoe owners and captains, while other fisherfolk, including women, are sidelined. This occurrence highlights limited involvement in the SSF governance in Sinoe.

Local CSOs and media entities exhibit minimal involvement in fisheries governance due to limited capacity and a lack of focus on the local fishing industry. There is an indication that CSOs and media entities play a limited role in the local fisheries sector. However, these entities expressed their willingness to engage when skilled and equipped with the necessary resources.

For livelihood concerns within the landscape, fisherfolk rely heavily on self-financing for their operations, with limited access to informal and formal financial services in the local fishing communities. Existing financial mechanisms, like microfinance and grants, are insufficient to address the sector's broader needs and demand for financial resources.

Despite these challenges, there is a strong foundation to build upon, leveraging existing governance structures, engaging stakeholders, and empowering local institutions to promote inclusive and sustainable fisheries management.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations emanating from the findings and inferences made are discussed below. The recommendations are targeted at earning the attention of stakeholders, particularly the Government of Liberia and NaFAA, donors, and civil society organizations, among others. The following actions are recommended to improve fisheries governance and promote sustainable practices in Sinoe County:

- i. **Consider Establishing Co-Management Associations (CMAs) in Sinoe County**
 - Develop and institutionalize CMAs to provide an inclusive governance framework in Sinoe.
 - Actively involve women and marginalized groups in CMA leadership and decision-making roles.
 - Leverage the existing governance setups to avert a parallel governance scenario that may subsequently sabotage and weaken the legitimacy of the intended CMA.
- ii. **Implement Capacity Building Programs for CSOs and Media**
 - Provide training sessions on the CMA model, governance principles, advocacy, and fisheries rights, drawing on case studies of CMAs in Liberia and elsewhere.
 - Equip media entities with skills, tools and knowledge to effectively report on fisheries governance and raise awareness in the fishing communities in Sinoe County.
- iii. **Look into Strengthening Financial Access**
 - Promote community-based financial mechanisms, such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), especially for last-mile communities in Sione.
 - Expand grant and microfinance programs to enhance fisherfolk's access to credit for asset acquisition and business expansion.
- iv. **Implement Education and Awareness Campaigns**
 - Launch adult education programs targeting fisherfolk, with a focus on women, to enhance their capacity for governance and business management.
 - Conduct widespread awareness campaigns on the CMA model to foster acceptance and participation.
- v. **Implement Gender Equity Initiatives**
 - Implement targeted programs to address gender disparities in fisheries governance and empower women in leadership roles.
 - Address traditional barriers that exclude women from participating in fisheries governance.
- vi. **Policy and Infrastructure Support**
 - Advocate for government policies that prioritize inclusive governance and sustainable fisheries practices.

- Invest in infrastructure to support post-harvest activities, ensuring equitable access for women and marginalized groups.

vii. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Develop a robust framework for monitoring the implementation of CMAs and other governance reforms.
- Regularly assess the socio-economic impacts of interventions to guide adjustments and scaling.

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ANNEX

Annex 1: Semi-structured research questionnaires (fisherfolk)

Annex 2: Interview guide (media organizations)

Annex 3: Interview guide (local CSOs)

Annex 4: Key informant interview (NaFAA)

Annex 5: Key informant interview (partners in the fisheries sector)

Annex 6: Discussion guide (focus group discussions)

ANNEX I

Semi-Structured Research Questionnaire (fisherfolk)

CERATH Development Organization (CDO) is implementing the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project in Sinoe County funded by the European Union (EU). The project seeks to improve good governance, democracy, and accountability in selected coastal landscapes of Liberia through enhanced capacities and performance of local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and media actors to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of fisher folks. As part of the project implementation, the project team is undertaking a Baseline Survey. Your assistance is needed to provide the team with the needed information. The information provided for this survey is to assist in gathering quality and reliable baseline data for the implementation of the project. Your responses will be strictly confidential and used solely for this project's activities and research.

Interviewees Consent

We would like you to kindly participate in this study by answering several questions concerning fishing practices in your community. The survey should take about 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and used for the project activities and research purposes. If you are uncomfortable answering questions at any time, you can refuse to answer or decide to stop the interview altogether.

Can I interview you? Yes No (If a respondent says yes – interview, if no, go to the next household).

Name of enumerator..... County.....

Date of interview..... Community/ District.....

GPS Coordinate Time

Demographic information about the interviewee and fishing activities

Name of fisher folks.....

Contact detail

Phone no.:

Gender

Male, Female

Age of respondent

(18-35) years (36-60) year Above 60 years

Are you the head of your household?

Yes No

What is your household size?

(1-3) (4-6) Above 6

Educational level

Primary education Secondary education Collage education Vocational/technical

No formal education

Are you living with any form of disability? \

Yes No

If yes please state the form of disability

Physical Vision Hard to hear Prefer not to say

Marital status

Single Married Divorced Widowed Cohabiting

To assess the viability, opportunities, and constraints of fisherfolks' livelihoods

Which area of the value chain are you involved with?

Fish harvesting Fishmonger

(If you are a fish harvester go to question 12 to 29)

(If you are a fish fishmonger skip to question 30 to 49)

What is the duration of your involvement in this area?

1-5 years 5-10 years 10-20 years Above 20 years

Do you own any fishing equipment/gears?

Yes No

If yes, select all that apply:

Peddle Canoe Canoe with Outboard engine Net, hook, and lines GPS and Compass
Life Jacket others (please specify _____)

Which type of fishing equipment/gears do you use?

Canoe with peddle and sail Canoe with Outboard engine, Net, hook, and lines GPS
and Compass Life Jacket others (please specify _____)

Which canoe type do you use for fishing?

Canoe with peddle & sail motorized

If motorized (outboard engine), which horsepower?

4 -9hp 9-15hp 25-40hp

How many days do you fish weekly during the dry season?

1-3 days 4-6 days 7- days

How many days do you fish weekly during the rainy season?

1- 3 days 4-6 days 7-days

What period fish catch is usually the highest?

May – September October – April others (please specify _____)

What period does fish catch the lowest?

May – September October – April others (please specify _____)

Do you target specific species?

Yes No

If yes, what are the main species targeted?

Bonnie Snappers, Croakers (cassava fish), Pipefish, Grouper
Mixed fish

How do you measure your fish catch?

Pile/hand full (0.5kg) Butter Bucket (5kg) Bag (20 kg) others

What is your average weekly catch per kilogram?

Below 20kg 20 – 40kg 40 – 60kg 60 – 120kg Above 120kg

During the last two years, on average, how much money do you earn per day from fishing?

\$ 1,000 LD-\$5,000LD \$6,000LD-\$10,000LD \$11,000LD-\$15,000LD Above \$15,000LD

Is there an alternative livelihood in this community aside from fishery value chain-related jobs?

Yes No

If yes can you list the 3 major alternative livelihoods aside from fishery value chain-related jobs.

Is fish harvesting your primary source of income in the last 12 months?

Yes No

If no, what is your primary source of income _____

Do you have other alternative livelihood aside from fish mongering?

Yes No

If yes, specify _____

What is the duration of your involvement in this area?

1-5 year 5-10 years 10-20 years Above 20 years

How fish caught landed are sold?

Fresh Smoke Sundry Salt

Which method do you use to process your fish?

Smoke Salt Sundry, others (please specify _____)

What are the most common fish species you process?

Bonnie Snappers, Croakers (cassava fish), Pipefish, Grouper
Mixed fish

How do you measure your daily fish purchased?

Pile/hand full (0.5kg) Butter Bucket (5kg) Bag (20 kg) others

What is your average weekly catch per kilogram?

Below 20kg 20 – 40kg 40 – 60kg 60 – 120kg Above 120kg

During the last two years, on average, how much money do you earn per day from selling fish?

\$ 1,000 LD-\$5,000LD \$6,000LD-\$10,000LD \$11,000LD-\$15,000LD Above \$15,000LD

Is there an alternative livelihood in this community aside from fishery value chain-related jobs?

Yes No

If yes can you list the 3 major alternative livelihoods aside from fishery value chain-related jobs.

Is fish mongering your primary source of income in the last 12 months?

Yes No

If no, what is your primary source of income _____

Do you have other alternative livelihood aside from fish mongering?

Yes No

If yes, specify _____

Where do you sell your fish?

In the community Market outside the community Boats on the ocean

Do you own any fish harvesting equipment/gears?

Yes No

If yes, select all that apply:

Peddle Canoe Canoe with Outboard engine, Net, hook, and lines GPS and Compass
Life Jacket others (please specify) _____

Do you own any fish processing equipment?

Yes No

If yes, (please specify) _____

What are the main challenges you face as a fisheries folks? Please list them _____

Do you have access to finance as a fisher folk?

Yes No

If no, how do you finance your business?

Have you received any support (from government, NGO, or company) in the past 3 years?

Yes No

If yes, provide details.

Organization	Period/year of intervention	Support received
b.		
c.		

Are you a member of any savings group?

Yes No

If yes, name of savings group

If no, why are you not a member of a saving group.

Would you like to join any savings group?

Yes No

If no, why? _____

To assess the existing fishery governance systems among the target fisher folks

What is the decision-making process in your community?

Do you participate in decision-making in your community?

Yes No

If yes, please explain when you last participated in decision-making in your community? _____

Which groups of people are more likely to be involved with local leadership?

Men Women Youth Men and women All the above

What is the fisheries leadership structure in your community?

Who are the key decision-makers in the fishing community?

Only men Only women Both men and women I don't know

What are the main challenges being faced by the currently fisheries leadership structure? _____

Are you a member of a fishing cooperative or community-based organization (CBO)

Yes No

If yes what is the name?

If no why, please explain _____

Is your fishing cooperative or community-based organization recognized by NaFAA and CDA?

Yes No

Does your Cooperative/CBO provide support or service to its members?

Yes No

If yes, what kind of support?

Training Provision fishing gear/equipment Access to credit Rescue at Ocean
Access to Processing Facility Market Linkages Others (Please specify_____)

How satisfied are you with your organization?

Fully satisfied Partially satisfied Not satisfied

Are you aware of any civil society organization(s) or media institution supporting or advocating for improve fisheries governance in Sinoe?

Yes No

If yes provide details

Name of CSO/radio station	Contact (if any)	Location		

To assess the interest of fisherfolks in co-management association as a governance system for fishery resources

Are you aware of Co-Management Association (CMA) approach to the fisheries sector?

Yes No

If yes, can you summarize your knowledge of it?.....

Are you aware of Co-Management Association (CMA) presence in Sinoe?

Yes No

If yes, are you a member of the CMA?

Yes No

If yes, what is your role? _____

Who are the core members of the management team of the CMA?

Fishermen Fishmongers and processors Government (NaFAA) and CSOs All the above,
I don't know

To assess the level of awareness and resilience practices of the fisher folks on climate change.

Have there been any environmental awareness in your community?

Yes No

If yes, what was it about?

Are there local laws or policies to safeguard the mangroves in your community?

Yes No

If yes, please explain the laws or policies.

Do people in your community fishing using chemicals?

Yes No

If yes what are the chemicals that are used?

Mercury Dynamite Others

Is there any information you would like to discuss that was not mentioned in the interview?

ANNEX 2

Interview Guide (media organizations)

CERATH Development Organization (CDO) is implementing the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project in Sinoe County funded by the European Union (EU). The project seeks to improve good governance, democracy, and accountability in selected coastal landscapes of Liberia through enhanced capacities and performance of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and media actors to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of fisher folks. As part of the project implementation, the project team is undertaking a baseline survey. Your assistance will be needed in providing the team with the needed information. The information provided for this survey is to assist in gathering baseline data for the implementation of the project.

Interviewees Consent

We would like you to participate in this study by answering several questions concerning fishing practices in your community and Sinoe County. The survey should take about 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only. If you are uncomfortable answering a particular question at any time, you can refuse to answer or decide to stop the interview altogether.

Can I interview you? Yes No (If a respondent says yes – interview, if no, go to the next institution)

Date of interview

Community District

Objectives

- To assess the operations of the target media agencies
- To assess the level of awareness and participation of the target media agencies in fishery sector governance of Liberia.
- Examine the role of information technology in service delivery among the target media agencies
- Assess the capacity need areas for the target media agencies.

Background Information/Organizational Information

Name of media agency.....
Name and position of respondent
Type of media agency (television, radio, print media)
Contact (telephone and email address):
What year was the company/organization/entity founded?
What is the registration status of the entity? (Limited liability, social enterprise, non-profit)
Is the entity fully Liberian owned? (i) Yes (ii) No
If no, explain further.....

To assess the operations of target media agencies

Does the company/organization/entity have a board of directors? (i) Yes (ii) No
If yes, how many persons are on the board?
How many females are on the board?
Does the company have a management team? (i) Yes (ii) No
How many persons are on the management team?
How many of them are females?
How many employees does the company have?
How many of them are full-time employees?
How many of the total staff strength are female?
What are your specific services of the entity?.....
What sectors are current the focal areas for the entity? (i) Business (ii) Politics (iii) Social Issues (iv) Sports (v) Other (please specify)

What informed your interests in the topics above?.....

What is the geographical coverage of your entity/organization?

Do you have a financial management of system in place? (i) Yes (ii) No

What financial system/software do you use?

Do you partner with any entities in your operations? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, which entities are those?

Entity's Name	Entity type	Purpose of partnership in summary

If no, why do you not partner with any other entities?

Do you have independent journalist(s) providing services to you? (i) Yes (ii) No

Are you involved in any advocacy activities of any kind? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, what advocacy is that?.....

How does your institution ensure ethical reporting?.....

How does your institution avoid external interference in your content?.....

To assess the level of awareness and participation of the target media agencies in the fishery governance sector of Liberia.

Does your organization cover or report on issues within the fishery sector of Liberia? (i) Yes (ii) No

If no, why?.....

If yes, what issues are covered? (list or state as many as you can).....

Are you aware of the Liberia's Co-Management Association (CMA) approach for the fishery sector? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, can you summarize your knowledge of it?.....

Do you have interest in covering and reporting issues related to Liberia' fishery sector? (i) Yes (ii) No

If no, why not?

Do you have interest in covering and reporting issues related to Liberia' fishery sector if supported by a donor funded project? (i) Yes (ii) No

Do you think the fishery sector is an area worth reporting? (i) Yes (ii) No

Examine the role of information technology in service delivery among the target media agencies

Does your company utilize social media in the coverage and dissemination of information/news? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, state the social media avenues you utilize?.....

What other software of digital tools you utilize in your operations?

Do you use any form of artificial intelligence in your activities? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, how?.....

What are the technologies/equipment you utilize in your work?

Assess the capacity need areas for the target media agencies.

What are the top three challenges your organization faces in the delivery of services? (i)
(ii)..... (iii)

State the areas of technical assistance/ capacity strengthening your organization requires.....

Among the areas stated above, state your top three capacity-strengthening needs. (i)
(ii)..... (iii)

Have you received training on topics/themes that will enhance the organization's operations? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, when and which entity provided that?

Do you have expertise in project management? (i) Yes (ii) No

Do you have expertise in managing donor funds? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, which donor or project was that?.....

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the lowest, and 5 being the highest, how would you rate your organization's expertise or skills in the following

Expertise Area	Rating
Project Management	

Financial Management & Budgeting	
Advocacy	
Team Building and Management	
Partnership or Coalition building.	
Fund Raising/Proposal Writing	
Gender Mainstreaming	
Social Media Management	
Photo and Videography	

Is there any information you would like to discuss that was not mentioned in the interview?

ANNEX 3

Interview Guide (local CSOs)

CERATH Development Organization (CDO) is implementing the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project in Sinoe County funded by the European Union (EU). The project seeks to improve good governance, democracy, and accountability in selected coastal landscapes of Liberia through enhanced capacities and performance of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and media actors to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of fisher folks. As part of the project implementation, the project team is gathering relevant information from CSOs in the target area on their role as development actors. Your assistance will be needed in providing the team with the needed information. The information provided for this survey is to assist in gathering baseline data for the implementation of the project.

Interviewees Consent

We would like you to participate in this study by answering several questions concerning fishing practices in your community. The survey should take about 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only. If at any time you are not comfortable answering any questions, you can refuse to answer or decide to stop the interview altogether.

Can I interview you? Yes No (If a respondent says yes – interview, if no, don't continue)

Date of interview

Community District

Background Information/Organizational Information

Name of CSO

Name and position respondent

Contact: (phone and email address)

Date of the establishment

What is the registration status of the entity? (Limited liability, social enterprise, non-profit)

Is the entity fully Liberian owned? (i) Yes (ii) No

If no, explain further

To assess the operations of the target civil society organizations (CSOs)

Does the organization have a board of directors? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, how many persons are on the board?

How many females are on the board?

Does the organization have a management team? (i) Yes (ii) No

How many persons are on the management team?

How many of them are females?

How many employees does the organization have?

How many of them are full-time employees?

How many of the total staff strength are females

What sector(s) is your organization area of focus?

- (i) Governance (ii) Women rights and gender base violence (iii) Natural Resource Management,
(iv) Land Right, (v) Agriculture, (vi) Peace Building, (vii) WASH (viii) Other (please specify)

What informed your interest in these focus areas?

What specific activity(ies) are you currently implementing in the focus area mentioned?

Who are the organization's intended beneficiaries?

Do you have a financial management system in place? (i) Yes (ii) No

What financial system/software do you use?

Do you partner with any entities in your operations? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, which entities are those?

Entity's Name	Entity type	Purpose of partnership in summary

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If no, why are you not partnering with other entities?
 What is your organization source of funding?
 Are you involved in advocacy activities of any kind? (i) Yes (ii) No
 If yes, please specify?.....
 How does your institution avoid external interference in your advocacy?.....

To assess the level of awareness and participation of the target CSOs in the fisheries governance sector of Liberia

Does your organization deal with issues relating to the fishery sector? (i) Yes (ii) No
 If no, why?.....
 If yes, what issues are covered? (list or state as many as you can).....
 Are you aware of Co-Management Association (CMA) approach for the fishery sector? (i) Yes (ii) No
 If yes, can you summarize your knowledge of it?.....
 Is your organization interested in partnering in the establishment of CMA?
 (i) Yes (ii) No
 If yes, what role will your organization play in the establishment?
 If no, why?
 Do you have interest in advocating on issues related to the fisheries sector? (i) Yes (ii) No
 If no, why not?
 Are you interested in advocating or reporting issues related to the fisheries sector if supported by a donor funded project? (i) Yes (ii) No
 Do you think the fisheries sector is an area worth focusing your advocacy on? (i) Yes (ii) No
 If yes, why?

Assess the areas of intervention and the capacity need areas for the target CSOs.

What are the top three challenges your organization faces in the delivery of services?
 (i) (ii)..... (iii)
 State the areas of technical assistance/ capacity strengthening your organization requires.....
 Among the areas stated above, state your top three capacity-strengthening needs.
 (i) (ii)..... (iii)
 Have you received training on topics/themes that will enhance the organization's operations? (i) Yes (ii) No
 If yes, when and which entity provided that?
 Do you have expertise in project management? (i) Yes (ii) No
 Do you have expertise in managing donor funds? (i) Yes (ii) No
 If yes, which donor or project was that?.....
 On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the lowest, and 5 being the highest, how would you rate your organization's expertise or skills in the following

Expertise Area	Rating
Project Management	
Financial Management & Budgeting	
Advocacy	
Team Building and Management	
Partnership or Coalition building.	
Fund Raising/Proposal Writing	
Gender Mainstreaming	
Natural Resource Management	

How does your organization advocate for livelihood empowerment of women, youth, and other marginalized groups in coastal communities?
 What are the different livelihood activities that involve women, youth, and other marginalized group in coastal communities?
 Is there any information you would like to discuss that was not mentioned in the interview?

ANNEX 4

Key Informant Interview (NaFAA)

CERATH Development Organization (CDO) is implementing the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project in Sinoe County funded by the European Union (EU). The project seeks to improve good governance, democracy, and accountability in selected coastal landscapes of Liberia through enhanced capacities and performance of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and media actors to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of fisher folks. As part of the project implementation, the project team is gathering relevant information from key stakeholders within fisheries sectors in the target area on their role as regulators/government. Your assistance will be needed in providing the team with the needed information. The information provided for this survey is to assist in gathering baseline data for the implementation of the project.

Interviewees Consent

We would like you to participate in this study by answering several questions concerning fishing practices in Liberia. The survey should take about 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only. If you are uncomfortable answering questions at any time, you can refuse to answer or decide to stop the interview altogether. Can I interview you?

Yes No (If a respondent says yes – interview, if no, don't continue)

Name of enumerator Date of interview

Community District

Organizational Information

Name of Entity:

Respondent name and Position:

Objective

- Examining the existing policy on fisheries governance and the level of implementation by NaFAA.
- Examining the CMA approach in the Liberia Fisheries Sector
- Examining the level of Collaboration and Partnerships in the Fisheries Sector:
- Assessing NaFAA's Capacity Building support to fisher Folks
- Understanding the different technologies and innovations used in fisheries management
- Examining NaFAA's approach to climate change and environmental issues

Examining the existing policy on fisheries governance and the level of implementation by NaFAA.

What are the main policy documents governing the fisheries sector?

What is the implementation status of the policy document?

Does the government have a fisheries governance structure in Sinoe County? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, what is the fisheries governance structure?

Are the existing fisheries governance structures formal or legally registered? If yes, please explain.

How do the governance structures at these levels function?

Are these structures different from the Co-management Association? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, to what extent?

What are measures put in place to advance the active participation of youth, women, and other marginalized in decision-making?

How does NaFAA engage with local fishing communities to promote sustainable fisheries practices in Sinoe?

How often does NaFAA conduct stakeholder engagements with fishing communities in Sinoe?

What mechanisms NaFAA instituted to ensure that fishing communities have a voice in fisheries management decisions?

Examining the CMA approach in the Liberia Fisheries Sector

What are the challenges faced by NaFAA in promoting the adoption of CMAs in Liberia?
How does NaFAA address human, socio-cultural, political, and infrastructural factors that affect the adoption of co-management associations in Liberia?
How does NaFAA work with local fishing communities to promote the adoption of CMAs?
What are measures put in place to advance the active participation of youth, women, and other marginalized in decision-making?
How does NaFAA ensure women and youth inclusion in CMA Leadership?
What is the role and responsibilities of the Local Authorities in CMA operation?
What are the main challenges faced by your organization in managing fisheries resources in Sinoe?
How does NaFAA address these challenges and promote sustainable fisheries governance?

Examining the level of Collaboration and Partnerships in the Fisheries Sector

How does NaFAA collaborate with other stakeholders (government agencies, NGOs, international organizations) to enhance fisheries management in Sinoe?
Are there any specific partnerships or initiatives focused on improving fisheries governance?

Assessing NaFAA's Capacity Building support to fisher Folks

What efforts has NaFAA undertaken to strengthen the capacity of fisher folks for sustainable fishing practices?
Are there any trainings or support provided by NaFAA to enhance fisheries management skills and knowledge?
Understanding the different technologies and innovations used in fisheries management
How does NaFAA leverage technology and innovation in fisheries management and monitoring?
Are there any specific technological tools or initiatives that have been used successfully in improving fisheries governance? If yes, please provide details..

Examining NaFAA's approach to climate change and environmental issues

What role does NaFAA play in promoting environmental conservation and protection of marine habitats in Sinoe?
How does NaFAA address environmental concerns related to fishing activities?
What are the key priorities or plans of NaFAA for enhancing fisheries governance in Sinoe County?
How does NaFAA envision the future sustainability of fisheries resources in the Sinoe County?
How does Climate Change affect the Fisheries Sector?
What are the measures instituted by NaFAA to promote climate change adaptation in coastal communities?
Is there any information you would like to discuss that was not mentioned in the interview?

ANNEX 5

Key Informant Interview (partners in the fisheries sector)

CERATH Development Organization (CDO) is implementing the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project in Sinoe County funded by the European Union (EU). The project seeks to improve good governance, democracy, and accountability in selected coastal landscapes of Liberia through enhanced capacities and performance of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and media actors to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of fisher folks. As part of the project implementation, the project team is gathering relevant information from key stakeholders within fisheries sectors in the target area. Your assistance will be needed in providing the team with the needed information. The information provided for this survey is to assist in gathering baseline data for the implementation of the project.

Interviewees Consent

We would like you to participate in this study by answering several questions concerning fishing practices in Liberia. The survey should take about 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only. If you are uncomfortable answering questions at any time, you can refuse to answer or decide to stop the interview altogether. Can I interview you?

Yes No (If a respondent says yes – interview, if no, don't continue.)

Name of enumerator Date of interview

Community District

Organizational Information

Name of Organization:

Respondent name and Position:

Examining the existing policy on fisheries governance and the level of implementation by Partner/organization

Are you aware of any policy document (s) governing the fisheries sector? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, what are the main policy document (s) governing the fisheries sector?

What is the implementation status of the policy document (s)?

Are you aware of a fisheries governance structure in Liberia? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, what is the fisheries governance structure?

How do the governance structures at these levels function?

Are these structures different from the Co-management Association? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, to what extent?

How does your organization engage with local fishing communities to promote sustainable fisheries practices?

How often does your organization conduct stakeholder engagements with fishing communities?

Is there any mechanism instituted by your organization to ensure fishing communities participate in fisheries management decision-making? (i) Yes (ii) No

What mechanisms has your organization instituted to ensure that fishing communities have a voice in fisheries management decisions?

Examining the CMA approach in the Liberia Fisheries Sector

Is your organization involved in Co-Management Association(CMA) promotion in the fisheries sector of Liberia?

(i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, please state your level of involvement.....

How does your organization work with local fishing communities to promote the adoption of CMAs?

What are the challenges faced by your institution in engaging fishing communities to promote the adoption of CMAs??

How does your organization address socio-cultural, political, and infrastructural factors that affect the adoption of co-management associations?

What measures are instituted by your organization to advance the active participation of youth, women, and other marginalized groups in decision-making?

How does your organization ensure the inclusion of women and youth in CMA Leadership?

From your experience in working with the fishing communities in establishing CMA, what are the roles and responsibilities of the Local Authorities in CMA operation?

What are the main challenges faced by your organization in managing fisheries resources ?

How does your organization address these challenges and promote sustainable fisheries governance?

Examining the level of Collaboration and Partnerships in the Fisheries Sector

Does your organization collaborate with other stakeholders (government agencies, NGOs, international organizations) to enhance fisheries management? Yes or No

If yes, please elaborate

Assessing your organization Capacity Capacity-building support to fisher Folks

Is your organization currently implementing fisheries related interventions in Sinoe? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, what are the intervention (s)?.....

Who are your targeted beneficiaries?

What are some of the activities that your organization is undertaken to strengthen the capacity of fisher folks for sustainable fishing practices?

Are there any trainings or support provided by your organization to enhance fisheries management skills and knowledge?

Yes or No

If yes, please elaborate

Understanding the different technologies and innovations used in fisheries management

Does your organization leverage technology and innovation in supporting fisheries management and monitoring activities?

(i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, how does your organization leverage technology and innovation in supporting fisheries management and monitoring ?

What specific method (s) or technique (s) has your institution used to improve fisheries governance?

Examining your organization approach to climate change and environmental issues

Is your organization implementing intervention (s) on climate change mitigation and adaptation in Liberia? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, what are the intervention(s) and where?

What role does your organization play in promoting environmental conservation and protection of marine habitats ?

How does your organization address environmental concerns related to fishing activities?

What are the key priorities or plans of your organization that enhance fisheries governance?

How does your organization envision future sustainability of fisheries resources?

How does Climate Change affect the Fisheries Sector?

What are the measures instituted by your organization to promote climate change adaptation in coastal communities?

Is there any information you would like to discuss that was not mentioned in the interview?

ANNEX 6

Discussion Guide (focus group discussions)

CERATH Development Organization (CDO) is implementing the Liberia Fisheries Governance Project in Sinoe County funded by the European Union (EU). The project seeks to improve good governance, democracy, and accountability in selected coastal landscapes of Liberia through enhanced capacities and performance of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and media actors to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of fisher folks. As part of the project implementation, the project team is gathering relevant information from key stakeholders within fisheries sectors in the target area. Your assistance will be needed in providing the team with the needed information. The information provided for this survey is to assist in gathering baseline data for the implementation of the project.

Name of enumerator Date of interview

Community District

Local fisheries leadership and governance

Existing leadership and governance structure

What are they, how are they constituted (how is the selection/appointment done), eligibility criteria to being part of, how often are they reconstituted and on what basis?

- Do you currently have a fishing leadership in place within this community?
- Are leaders appointed or elected? If appointed, how is the process carried out? If elected, how does the election process work? Please elaborate.
- What are the positions in the leadership?
- What are the requirements and criteria for becoming a leader in this fishing community?
- How many years or months can an individual hold a particular leadership position for, and is it governed by any local law or policy?
- Can female fisherfolks be appointed or elected to any position in the leadership structure if they meet the criteria?
- Are there any age or gender limitations to holding some position within the leadership?
- Can a foreign fisherman hold a leadership position within this community? If not, why?

Roles and responsibilities

what are their functions & responsibilities, how do they manage & regulate fisheries and coastal resources, who do they report to?

- What are the key functions of the sea chief, secretary, chair lady, youth leader, and so on?
- Who does fisheries leadership report to?
- What are some of the actions taken by the leadership in managing fisheries resources within your community?

Accountability mechanisms

What platforms are available (for lead fisherfolk to be accountable to the ordinary fisherfolk), are these platforms being utilized, how are performances (good and bad) rewarded, what limitations are occasioned by these platforms, how can these platforms be strengthened

- Do you hold regular meetings as a fishing community to assess the leadership performance?
- How are regular meetings held, and how are records maintained or recorded? Is there a record of engagement?
- Does the fisheries leadership collect any monies from fisherfolks for canoe registration or penalties of some sort from anyone who violates the laws? If so, how are these funds accounted for?
- Can a leader be released from his or her position because of bad behaviour's or poor performance? If so, what are the procedures involved?
- Have you experienced such a situation before, and what was the outcome?
- Is there a form of appreciation for a leader(s) who performs well in his or her position?

Participatory structures (for the everyday fisherfolk)

Existing systems

How do fisherfolk get to participate in fisheries & coastal governance, are such structures recognized (being formal or informal) and by who, are these participatory structures available to all fisherfolk, on what basis are some not allowed to participate, limitations these systems

- Does your community hold general meetings that allow every fisherfolk to speak their mind on fisheries and coastal governance-related matters?
- How are these meetings held?
- Do these meetings include NaFAA, LAFA, the local leader of the community, and the fisheries leadership at some point, or do every meeting?
- Does everyone take part in every meeting or some meetings are restricted to certain individuals (disability, gender, foreign fisherfolk), if so why?
- How does the national government receive information about fisheries activities from your community, and who is responsible for communicating such information

Marginalization

Manifestations

What is the basis (e.g. gender, disability, nationality, etc) and manifestations of marginalization (within the fishing community), how do cultural elements generally amplify these manifestations?

- Are people stopped from participating in a particular fisheries activity based on their gender, disability, and nationality? What are those activities and why?
- Apart from gender, disability, and nationality, are there other reasons for exclusion?
- How do cultural practices, traditional laws, or customs impact the exclusion of women, youth, and persons with disability? If so, what can be done to mitigate this situation?
- Are foreign fisherfolk allowed to engage in other fisheries value chain activity apart from fish harvesting?

Gendered dimensions

How are women limited in fisheries governance/leadership roles, how are they limited in their participation in fisheries governance, how did these (limitations) come about, do the women find these problematic, how do these reflect in their access to economic resources.

- Are women and men treated differently in specific situations such as access to finance, access to resources, decision-making roles, and instances of harassment or abuse?
- Women are not allowed to do certain things (going to sea, becoming fishing chief, participating in fisheries-related issues etc). Do you consider it a problem? If so, why? Please elaborate.
- Does it have any impact on your income and livelihood?

PWD elements

Same as the “gendered dimensions”

- Are PWD treated differently in specific situations such as access to finance, access to resources, decision-making roles, and instances of harassment or abuse?
- PWD are not allowed to do certain things (going to sea, holding leadership positions, participating in fisheries-related issues, etc). Do you consider it a problem? If so, why? Please elaborate.
- Does it have any impact on your income and livelihood?