

SECTION 1

- 1.1 Summary of discussions and recommendations
- 1.2 Summary of Case Studies on Associations in the artisanal fisheries sector.

1.1 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Seven case studies dealing with fisherfolk organizations were presented. They concerned the Revolutionary Cooperative Regrouping in Benin, the Fisherfolk Economic Interest Groups in Senegal, the community development associations in Shenge and Tombo in Sierra Leone, Kaback in Guinea and the ones in The Gambia, as well as Promo-Pêche company in Gabon.
2. Following the presentation of these documents, which the participants considered to be of high quality and from which specific factors for success and failures of fisherfolk organizations were delineated, the Secretariat briefly presented the highlights of the various Case Studies on Associations in Artisanal Fisheries Sector and invited IDAF Senior Advisor Project Planning and Extension, to describe "Landing Site Users Committees" which have recently been created in Conakry, Guinea.
3. It was noted that quite often fisherfolk associations are created for the purpose of benefitting from certain advantages provided by the State or projects. As soon as external funding ceased these associations disappeared more or less rapidly.
4. The participants felt that the grouping of fisherfolk in the artisanal fisheries sector is a natural and desirable phenomenon. Indeed the society is structured on the basis of several organizations. The most appropriate form such associations should take is another question.
5. The participants noted that certain community associations charge for their services provided to beneficiaries and that in some cases they surcharged fishing material to fund micro-projects in the interest of the community.
6. The participants observed that the problem of credit is intimately linked to the existence of groupings. They also remarked that the rate of repayment was hardly linked to the profession or the ethnic origin of the beneficiary. It was also observed that when credit is provided by the private sector adequate profitability studies are undertaken.
7. The community development structures that have been created in some regions were considered by some participants to be overloaded. The question was whether this was justifiable. It was pointed out that the reality of a given community is complex and that these associations seek to take into account all the different facets of the community.
8. The participants further identified reasons for past failures in fisherfolk associations to include :
 - a) the fact that they were more or less created by the State;
 - b) the lack of an economic basis, or failure to respond or address the common needs of its members;

- c) the multiplicity of the functions that these associations were expected to embrace (access to credit, mutual guarantee, distribution of input or even marketing of fish, etc), as opposed to the situation say in Europe where cooperatives generally handle only a single function;
- d) lack of proper planning of financial and operational activities and the absence of effective monitoring measures; and
- e) inadequate education programmes in management and training aimed at fostering members understanding and to develop group cohesiveness.

9. The participants expressed concern about the status, rights and obligations of migrant fishermen in their host countries.

10. The participants also remarked that there is a tendency by the State to disengage itself from certain activities and that free market economy is being pursued in a number of countries. It was however also noted that some of the responsibilities of the State in the area of development cannot be abandoned or shifted to other persons/institutions. As such, while the State may not be directly concerned with the imposition of specific types of associations, it may nonetheless provide indirect assistance that contribute to the functioning of the associations.

11. On the basis of these observations, the participants recommended that:

- a. whatever form the association may take adherence to the grouping should be voluntary;
- b. fisherfolk associations should try to respond to the common needs of its members in order to improve its chances of success;
- c. the number of objectives be reduced to the barest minimum, one or two, to limit the risk of failure;
- d. the existence of many migrant fishermen in the sub-region be taken into account and that adequate attention be given to this phenomenon;
- e. the formation of fisherfolk organizations be adapted to the specific or special conditions of the community.

12. A field trip was organized to the Community Fisheries Centre at Tanji. Participants expressed satisfaction with the opportunity this afforded them to exchange experiences and improve their knowledge of the artisanal fisheries sector of The Gambia.

SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES ON ASSOCIATIONS
IN THE ARTISANAL FISHERY SECTOR

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The eight fisherfolks associations dealt with by the case studies presented here belong roughly to the three following categories:

- "fishermen associations"; that is whose members are only boat-owners or fishermen. Such associations are known in Benin as Revolutionary Cooperative oriented groups (GRVC) and in Senegal as Economic Interest Groups (GIE);
- "Community associations" whose members belong to different socio-professional groups, such as Shenge and Tombo associations in Sierra Leone, Kaback association in Guinea and the ones in the Gambia;
- the "private enterprises" such as Promo-Pêche in Gabon.

The characteristics of each of these socio-professional groups were determined with the following selected criteria:

- a. the size of the organization measured by its membership;
- b. the organization's activity areas;
- c. the individual members contributions;
- d. the availability of a self-managed development fund;
- e. proximity to main market;
- f. previous intervention in area considered;
- g. GDP per inhabitant; and
- h. convertibility of national currency.

The selection of these criteria is rather arbitrary but it is based mainly on information provided by the case-studies. Three groups of criteria can be distinguished: indicators related to institutional characteristics of the organizations (a, b, c, d); "regional" indicators (e, f) and macro-economic indicators (g, h).

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the situation of indicators for each "Association".

Table 1. Institutional characteristics of the Associations

	Type	Member-ship	Areas intervention	Members contribution	Development Fund
Shenge (Sierra Leone)	Cooperative	700	Credit for processing and marketing; fuel and goods supplies; fish selling; 3 micro-projects	Over invoicing of fishing inputs; savings for services	yes
Tombo (Sierra Leone)	Association de developement du Village Tombo	870	Maintenance development and management of community facilities: health center, school, market, landing sites, micro-projects	Over-invoicing of fishing inputs; payment of service	yes
Kaback (Guinea)	Village Develop-ment Council	extensive	Credit for fishing gear; processing; "micro-projects"	Over-invoicing inputs; payment of services	yes
Owendo (Gabon)	Limited company	-	purchase/sale, exports, credit, boat management	-	no
Economic Interest Groups (GIE) Senegal	Economic Interest Group	about 20	Credit for fishing equipment	nil	no
Roberty (Benin)	Cooperative oriented Revolutionary Group	15	Credit for fishing equipment	nil	no
Ewe-Condji (Benin)	Revolutionary Cooperative oriented Group	15	Credit for fishing equipment	nil	no
(Gambia)	Village Development Committee	extensive	Credit for fishing equipment; maintenance, development and management of community facilities	Savings; payment of services	yes

Table 2. Regional and macro-economic characteristics

	Previous assistance	Proximity to market	GDP per inhabitant (in US\$)	Convertible currency
Shenge (Sierra Leone)	no	no	250	no
Tombo (Sierra Leone)	no	no	250	no
Kaback (Guinea)	no	no	350	no
Owendo (Gabon)	yes	yes	3,000	yes
Economic Interest Groups GIE (Senegal)	yes	yes	650	yes
Roberty (Benin)	yes	yes	450	yes
Ewe-condji (Benin)	yes	yes	450	yes
(Gambia)	yes	yes	300	no

By regrouping the different associations as suggested at the beginning of the document one can easily determine the characteristics which are specific to each of these socio-economic groups. Table 3 presents those results.

Table 3. Comparison of the three types of associations according to the different criteria

	Fishing Associations	Community Groups	Private Enterprises
Membership	10 - 30	≥ 100	-
Areas of intervention	Credit for fishing equipment	Credit for equipment, processing and marketing; development, maintenance and management of community facilities	Credit for fishing equipment; purchase and sale of fish
Members contributions	no	over-invoicing of inputs; payment for the use of facilities	-
Development fund	no	yes	no
Previous assistance	yes	no	yes
Proximity to market	yes	no	yes
GDP per inhabitant	450 - 650	250 - 350	3,000 ¹
Convertible currency	yes	no	yes

The case studies considered seem to show rather clearly that two strategies are operating:

- the first aiming mostly and exclusively, **to solve input supply problems and sometimes problems related to fish marketing**, through either cooperative oriented groups or private companies;
- the second seeking **to solve development problems faced by the whole community**, having in mind that fishery problems are among the most important ones since the economic development of these communities depends mainly on this activity.

Historically, one can say that these two strategies followed each other and were introduced in specific socio-economic context. In fact, during the 1980's, community development strategies succeeded the "classical" artisanal fishery development strategies. However it seems that those strategies were not indifferently implemented in all the countries of the region. Besides, they were applied in well determined regions in these countries.

¹ The case of Cacheu private enterprise in Guinea Bissau (Average GDP = 150 US\$) not covered in the present series of case studies tends to give a less comparative interest to criteria. It can however be noticed that in both cases these companies were created following EEC-financed assistance projects.

These regions have no history of foreign assistance, are distant from main urban centres, lack certain social facilities, are strongly dependent on fishery activities, but also show a certain "homogeneity". It can also be noticed that the integrated approach is mainly implemented in very low income countries, income being measured by GDP per inhabitant².

The aim of this strategy is both to attempt to promote self-managed development in communities where state support (human, technical and financial) is almost inexistant, and also to reduce rural people drift to the major urban areas by paying more attention to these communities, what could be referred to as a "rural planning policy".

This combination of community development and rural planning policy is perhaps an essential characteristic of actions undertaken in Shenge, Tombo and Kaback. The other major particular aspect of these development associations is their "institutional development" component which aim to create and to manage new community structures. It is often considered that this element is necessary for the activities to last.

Another development practice which long prevailed in the region was that of planned politics and economy. The artisanal fishery sector had not been spared, as can be noticed through the creation of numerous cooperative, state companies for input supply or marketing of fishery products, to mention only artisanal fishery. This concepts is now abandoned by many countries. Few cooperatives outlived it and the austerity measures implemented in the mid-1980's were fatal to most of these companies who had never been able to demonstrate their profitability.

In these circumstances, it is important to define rather clearly the responsibilities of the State in the general development of the artisanal fisheries sector, particularly now when there is a risk that in the context of structural adjustment programmes, a "No State" period succeeds an "All State" one. It is in such a context that in as different countries as Gabon and Guinea Bissau private businessmen now appear and carry out functions which were formerly performed by para-statal companies.

The different case studies indicate that there is no single model for artisanal fishery development in West Africa. Different approaches were implemented at various times. However, it seems to day that the integrated development approach involving also the participation of beneficiaries in one way or the other in the decision making process is widely accepted by both the governments in the sub region and the main donors.

² **This is a measure which does not take into account the fact that the inhabitants of rural areas have generally an income level below this average.**