

**West Africa Task Force**  
Groupe de Travail de l'Afrique de l'Ouest

**REGIONAL COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS:  
FCWC WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE**

**GLOBAL FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT TRAINING WORKSHOP  
HALIFAX, CANADA  
31 JULY 2023**

# Background

The FCWC West Africa Task Force (WATF) was formally established by the Member States of the Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) in 2015.

Three key drivers:

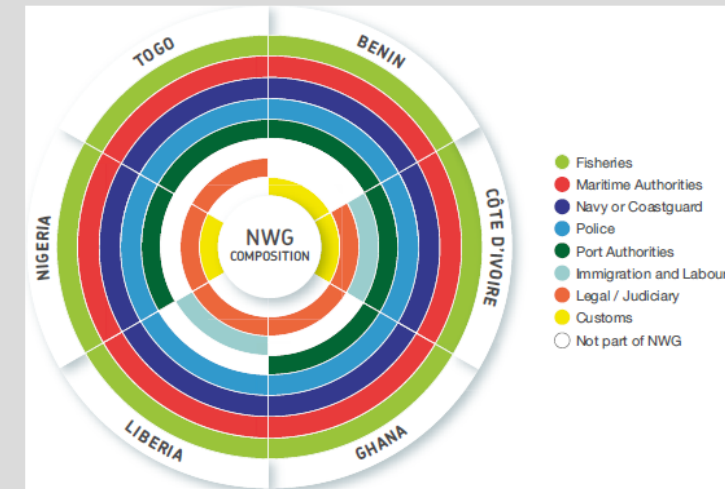
- IUU fishing had been identified as an enormous regional challenge
- The WATF operationalised key FCWC conventions that had been agreed and signed, but not actioned
- The success of the FISH-i Africa Task Force in the WIO was recognised

Initial funding was provided by the Norwegian Development Agency (Norad). Subsequent initiatives have been integrated into the mechanism.



# What and Who is the WATF?

- The MCS Working Group of the FCWC.
- Fisheries Ministry / Agency led in each Member State, and at the regional level.
- Within each country there is a National inter-agency working group (NWG), made up of agencies relevant to MCS operations. Structure of this varies country to country based on national legal set up, priorities, and agency mandates.
- Both regional and national groups and activities are supported by a technical team, made up of the FCWC Secretariat, TMT, and Stop Illegal (SIF). TMT staff are housed within and institutionally support the FCWC Secretariat in Ghana.
- Other institutional and technical partners

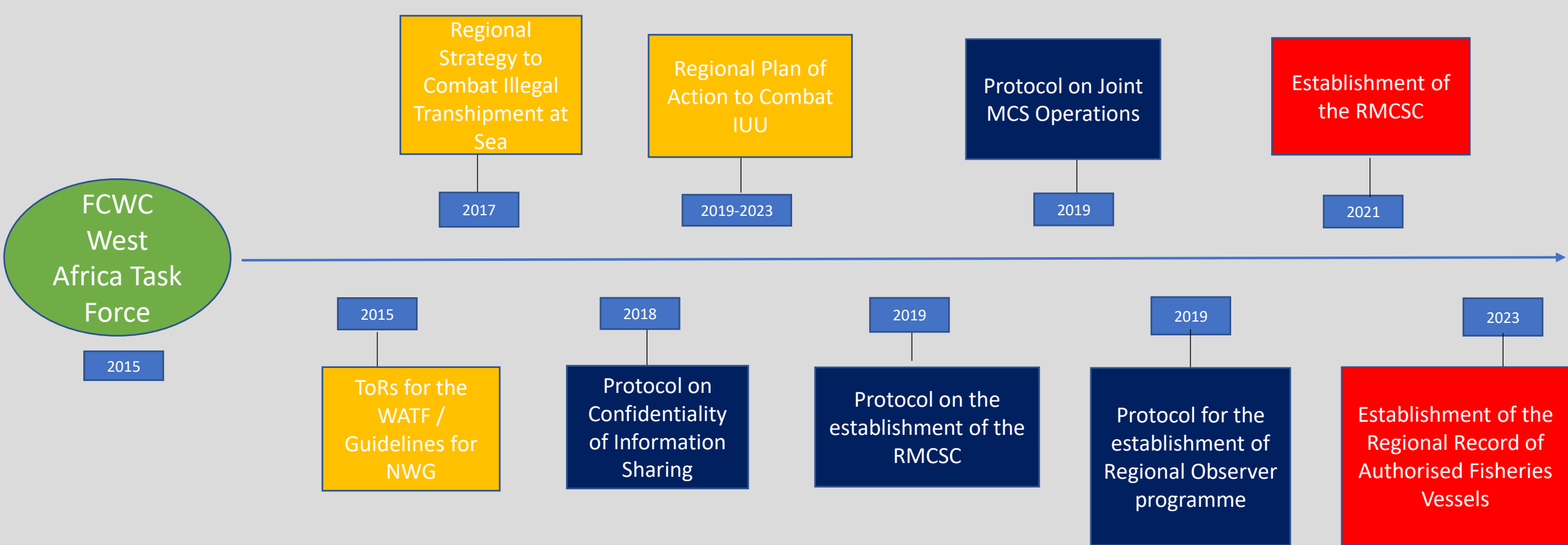


# Key WATF Structures and Operations

- Task Force meetings held twice a year. Rotating host country.
- National Working Group meetings technically supported 1-2 times per year per country. Further meetings held by individual countries.
- Regional communications platform for rapid sharing of information. Near live English-French translation.
- Regular sharing of national license lists compiled into regional list.
- FCWC Regional MCS Centre (RMCSC)
- Dedicated regional and national training programmes
- Personnel exchanges
- Joint Operations
- Ongoing MCS capacity assessments
- Annual FCWC Conference of Ministers



# Timeline of FCWC Member State WATF Commitments



# State and non-State actor cooperation

**FCWC Member States:** Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Togo

**FCWC Secretariat**  
- RFB, regional coordination, strategy, policy and conventions

**Technical Team NGOs:** TMT, SIF  
- Technical assistance, intelligence, operational support, capacity building, policy and communications assistance.

**ECOWAS**  
- Political anchor, two way information flow on regional policy

**EFCA**  
- Technical assistance, capacity building, operational support

**UN Agencies:** UNODC, FAO, ILO  
- Operational cooperation, technical assistance, legal assistance

**Educational Institutes:** RMU, ISMI  
- Capacity building

**Other Countries:**  
- Case / operation cooperation  
- Operational support / platforms

**Other organisations**  
- various



# The WATF experience in Ghana

Fisheries resources play important roles in Ghana's economy including:

- Revenue generation
- Nutrition and Food security
- Employment generation
- Tradition and culture

However, due to various political, economic and environmental factors, the Ghana and the West African region has been identified as a hotspot for fishing. In part due to inadequate capacity in MCS activities.

Ghana hosts two important regional fisheries ports in Tema and Takoradi

Ghana hosts the FCWC Secretariat and RMCSC

Ghana has in place a national inter-agency MCS group called the Fisheries Enforcement Unit (FEU). This has been broadened under the WATF, and dedicated working groups (e.g. PSMA) have been established.



# Ghana Focus



- Capacity building has been a priority for Ghana - particularly for MCS personnel.
- Each Member State was requested by the FCWC Secretariat and Technical Team to identify priority areas for capacity support; it was a requirement that these have an inter-agency cooperation component.
- For Ghana the primary focus has been on fisheries port controls (PSMA), with a secondary focus on at-sea patrols.
- Cooperation focused on three main thematic areas:
  - Structural
  - Capacity
  - Tools
- WATF capacity support provided by the technical team has significantly improved MCS capacities, work routines, and results.





# Key WATF operational outcomes in Ghana and the Region

- Capacity support to national, regional, and international MCS processes and operation (including priority focus on PSMA) has resulted in better informed, trained, and equipped fisheries and related personnel
- Active and effective regional communication, information sharing, and cooperation between countries
- Active and effective national inter-agency cooperation
- Strengthening of vessel inspections, investigations and arrests
- Strengthening licensing and flagging application due diligence processes
- Identification of Modus Operandi of illegal operators informs MCS priorities and planning
- Joint patrols - pre operation analysis, live operation and debriefs
- Development of tools and training, including manuals and new tool Vessel Viewer



# Conclusions

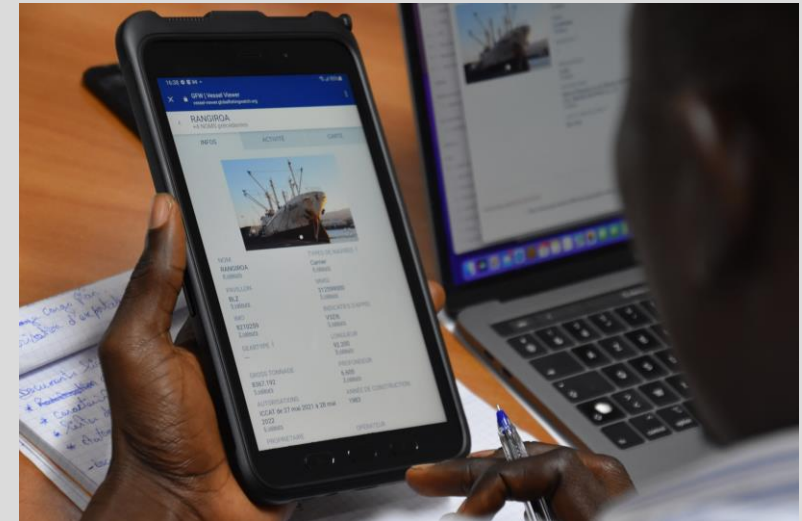
## Key outcome:

While it is very difficult to quantify, Ghana and the other FCWC Member States all agree that the WATF serves as an important deterrent to illegal fisheries operators in the region, driving overall improved compliance.

## Key conclusion:

Fighting illegal fishing activities is a shared responsibility at national, regional and international level. Although significant strides have been made through the WATF and the cooperation with the technical team, a lot more remains to be done. To truly eliminate illegal fishing activities, cooperation is the key.

Let us put a sense of urgency in our actions by committing fully to cooperate in the fight against illegal fishing and related activities.



# The WATF experience in Cote d'Ivoire

Fisheries resources play a important roles in Cote d'Ivoire economy, food security and livelihoods.

## Overview of Cote d'Ivoire Fisheries

### ❖ Physical environment

- 550 km of coastline
- 200 000 km<sup>2</sup> EEZ
- 4 main rivers (3,000 km)
- Coastal rivers

### ❖ Legal and regulatory framework

- Law n°2016-554 of July 26, 2016 relating to fishing and aquaculture
- The enforcement decrees of the said law, including Decree n° 2021-790 of December 8, 2021 establishing the monitoring, control and surveillance procedures for fisheries

### ❖ Institutional framework

- National Fisheries Management Strategy (NFMS), resulting from the National Policy for the Development of Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture (PONADEPA)

### ❖ MCS capacity

- Satellite Tracking
- Maritime Patrols
- Port Inspections
- Maritime Observation

# WATF in Cote d'Ivoire

## GRUPE DE TRAVAIL NATIONAL

- Strengthen and improve collaboration between national administrations involved in fishing activities (port, navy, maritime authorities)
- Share information and intelligence on illegal fishing activities
- Develop operational procedures for port inspection and the issuing of fishing authorizations.



# WATF in Cote d'Ivoire

## Joint Inspections

- Ensure effective PSMA implementation
- Prevent vessels from escaping the scrutiny of inspectors in the country where they fish.
- Sharing fishing vessel and reefer inspection experience

## Joint Patrols

- detect possible infringements within the EEZs of both countries.
- Strengthen fisheries surveillance capabilities through enhanced cooperation between the two countries.
- Ensure compliance with management measures (biological rest, authorizations).



# Key WATF institutional and procedural outcomes in Cote d'Ivoire and the Region

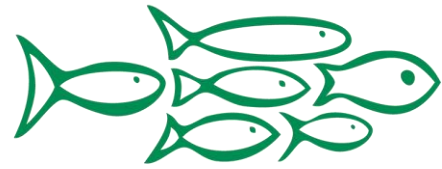
- Bi-annual Task force meetings allow for clear discussion and agreement, with a focus on decision making and identification to the technical team on Member State priorities.
- Development and formalisation of inter-agency cooperation has streamlined inter-agency collaboration in the domestication of international agreements (e.g. PSMA), as well as national policy, MCS operations and work routines
- Establishment of the RMCSC
- Agreement to expand the regional closed season initially established by Ghana.
- Joint operational agreements facilitate regional joint MCS operations (e.g. recent joint Ghana-Cote d'Ivoire patrol to enforce closed season)
- Strengthened Member State engagement in international processes, such as membership to RFMOs, Africa Voice at FAO (PSMA, Transshipment Guidelines), and contribution to international forums.



# Looking Ahead

- Development of a Phase 3 is currently final stages with Norad, based on a set of priority work areas identified by the FCWC Secretariat and Member States.
- Phase 3 will focus on retaining the WATF mechanism, along with two crucial MCS operational frameworks – the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and the Regional MCS Centre (RMCSCC) – established by the Member States and the FCWC.
- Phase 3 will also focus on new areas of work including decent working conditions, and development of a working group of regional non-State actors





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## THANK YOU

Richard Yeboah  
Head of MCS division  
Ghana  
[richkyeboah@gmail.com](mailto:richkyeboah@gmail.com)

Maxime Diomande  
Centre de Surveillance de Peche  
Cote d'Ivoire  
[maximediomande@gmail.com](mailto:maximediomande@gmail.com)

Viviane Koutob  
West Africa Regional Coordinator  
TMT  
[vkoutob@tm-tracking.org](mailto:vkoutob@tm-tracking.org)

