



  
Final  
evaluation



FINAL EVALUATION

**WA8 - SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SMALL PELAGIC  
FISH STOCKS AND CRITICAL HABITATS IN WEST AFRICA  
2018-2022**

22.11.2022

# 1. INTRODUCTION

In the coastal countries of West Africa, small pelagic fish are vitally important to food security. At the same time, their exploitation is a major economic and social factor, which means that these fish stocks are subject to strong pressure from the fishing industry. What’s more, they are sensitive to changes in environmental conditions and face significant habitat degradation, especially at spawning sites.

Our action plan worked to reduce the overexploitation of small pelagic fish by 2022, through more sustainable stock management and effective protection of critical habitats along the coast. For this, it was essential to first identify and then protect critical small pelagic habitats, produce quality data, and improve transparency in the fishing industry.

## OBJECTIVES:

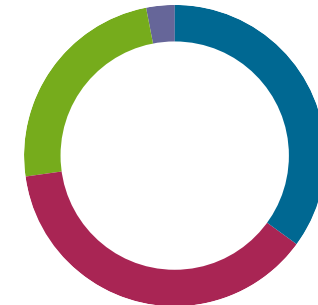
- Identify, characterize and map critical sites for small pelagics (SP)
- Improve data collection systems and scientific knowledge of SP fish stocks and critical habitats
- Build stakeholder capacity for effective, sustainable management of habitats and stocks
- Advocate for fisheries good governance and transparency
- Strengthen the partnership and cooperation among fisheries stakeholders

### BUDGET ENGAGED

€ 7,350,000

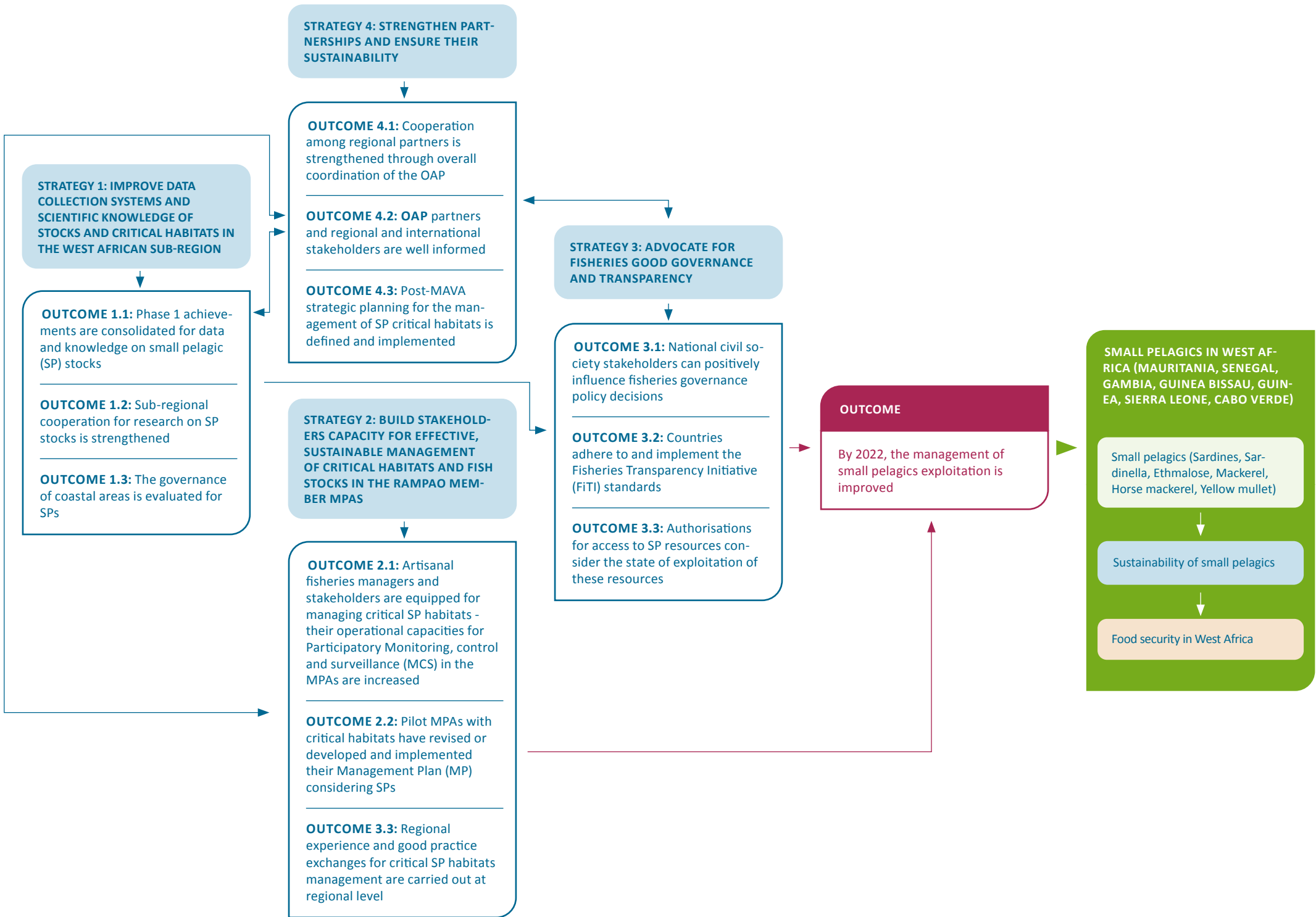
### BUDGET PER STRATEGY

- Improve data collection systems 35%
- Build stakeholder capacity 38%
- Advocacy 24%
- Strengthen partnerships 3%



## THE PARTNERSHIP





## 2. PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES

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The implementation of the action plan was based mainly on (i) the strategic partnership with the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), the Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas in West Africa (RAMPAO) and the Regional Conservation Partnership for the Coastal and Marine Zone (PRCM) (ii) operational partnership with national and international institutions involved in the management of fisheries and the marine and coastal environment; and finally (iii) the development of synergies and the pooling of resources.

This has allowed the following activities to be carried out:

- The adoption of a standardised method for collecting fisheries data by the research institutions of the four countries targeted by the action plan;
- The consensual definition of the concept of critical sites for small pelagics (SP);
- The development and dissemination of a dynamic atlas of critical sites for SPs;
- The revision of the development and management plans (PAG) of the target Marine Protected Areas (MPA) taking into account small pelagics;
- The establishment and operationalisation of national and sub-regional advocacy coalitions for fisheries transparency;
- The design and operationalisation of a national fisheries transparency index and its application in Mauritania and Guinea;
- Supporting countries in joining the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) and implementing its standard.

The action plan focuses on four strategies.

### STRATEGY 1: IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

We improved data collection systems and scientific knowledge on stocks and critical habitats for small pelagics (SPs) in the West African sub-region. Our activities included:

- researching SP stocks and critical habitat in West Africa;
- unifying and digitalising artisanal fisheries survey systems;
- encouraging cooperative SP research;
- disseminating scientific information to facilitate decision-making.

### STRATEGY 3: ADVOCATE FOR TRANSPARENCY AND IMPLEMENT FISHERIES REGULATIONS

We strengthened the implementation of tools and regulations related to fisheries management and focused on stakeholder mobilisation to improve governance and transparency of fisheries. Our activities included:

- capacity building for civil society organisations for more influence on policy decisions concerning fisheries management;
- establishing national and regional advocacy coalitions for transparency in fisheries management;
- considering the state of SP stocks when granting access, authorisations, and fishing agreements;
- supporting target countries engaged in the process of joining FiTI and conforming to its standards.

### STRATEGY 2: BUILD STAKEHOLDER CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE, SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

We built capacity for managers and other fishery stakeholders to ensure better protection of critical sites in the Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas in West Africa (RAMPAO) and target Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Additionally, equipment was provisioned to improve the monitoring system. Our activities included:

- capacity building for stakeholders from the West Africa sub-region in Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainable fishing standards;
- strengthening artisanal fisheries managers and stakeholders capacities in participatory MPA surveillance;
- integrating SP management in the development and implementation of MPA's management plans;
- exchanging experiences and good practices for managing SP stocks and critical habitats.

### STRATEGY 4: PARTNERSHIP STRENGTHENING AND SUSTAINABILITY

We strove to consolidate the advances made by the action plan and to lay the foundation for sustainable partnerships. Our activities included:

- managing Steering Committee meetings;
- improving partnerships at the sub-regional and international levels;
- mobilising additional financial resources and new strategic partners to support SP sustainable management.

## LESSONS

During the implementation of the action plan, cooperation between research institutions has been effective and has allowed the harmonisation and dematerialisation of fisheries data collection. The management plans of the target MPAs have been revised taking into account small pelagics, and their implementation has begun. Support for implementation of the FiTi Standard has enabled Mauritania to comply with the initiative. To promote fisheries transparency, national advocacy coalitions have been established in four countries.

The Task Force on fisheries agreements set up under the action plan have failed to play their role, mainly due to a lack of ownership by stakeholders. In addition, the platform for data and information exchange is yet to be operational. Similarly, some disagreements over personnel to be trained by MSC were noted at the start of the action plan.

Our experience with the action plan has provided the following insights:

1. Harmonization and digitalisation of artisanal fisheries survey forms have contributed to sub-regional integration of shared resource management.
2. Making the MSC Sustainable Fishing Standards training manual available in the 3 sub-regional languages (English, French, and Portuguese) allowed for better use of the tool.
3. MSC sustainable fishing standards training should focus on artisanal fishery stakeholders and MPA managers.
4. Providing appropriate equipment and training in participatory monitoring programmes to key stakeholders like managers and members of management committees contributed to better involvement of local fishermen.
5. Including small pelagics and their critical habitats in management plans reinforced sustainable resource management.
6. Mobilising civil society had a positive effect on fisheries governance.
7. Synergies between project partners facilitated coordinated interventions.
8. FiTi membership of one country in the sub-region created a positive ripple effect on other states.

### 3. RESULTS AND IMPACTS

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Use of a mobile application for data collection by research centres improved scientific knowledge on small pelagic stocks. Data collectors from research centres and scientists were trained to use this application, and scientists were also trained to configure the mobile application as necessary. An electronic logbook was developed and delivered to the target countries.

Capacity building for the sustainable management of small pelagics and the protection of their critical sites took place at two levels. The managers of about 20 MPAs of the RAMPAO network and more than 200 fisheries stakeholders were trained in the MSC Sustainable Fishing standards. To improve the protection of these sites, monitoring, control and surveillance training was provided for managers and members of the management committees, while surveillance equipment was provided to target MPAs. The identification, characterisation and mapping of critical sites led to the elaboration and distribution of an Interactive Atlas.

The establishment of four national and one sub-regional advocacy coalitions for transparency helped build stakeholder capacity to influence policy decisions on fisheries governance. Supporting Mauritania's efforts to implement the FiTI Standard enabled the country to remain compliant and to publish its second report. This support contributed to the relaunch of Cape Verde's admission process.

The organisation of joint events and the involvement of partners in various forums led to the development of a communication plan and better engagement of action plan stakeholders. A strategy to mobilise financial resources and potential partners was initiated to consolidate the achievements of the action plan.

## CASE STUDY 1: SUB-REGIONAL UNIFICATION OF ARTISANAL FISHING QUESTIONNAIRES

Improving small pelagic artisanal fishing questionnaires had a positive effect on data collection systems in four countries (Senegal, Mauritania, The Gambia, and Guinea Bissau). Sub-regional cooperation and the digitalisation of the survey forms on tablets increased and, since the countries were provided with an electronic logbook for on-board industrial fisheries observers. More than 270,000 fish and 15,000 canoes were sampled in one year.



Tablets were used for data collection on small pelagics in Mauritania (© Mika DIOP, 2021)



## CASE STUDY 2: FISHERIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVES IN THE SUB-REGION - A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Many stakeholders were puzzled when Mauritania submitted its application to FiTI in 2018 and then was nearly ruled out of the initiative after a two-year delay in producing its first report. With PRCM's technical and financial support, Mauritania was able to catch up on its reporting and make its data public. Mauritania has proved that improving small pelagics management is possible - sometimes it just takes time and help along the way!



الفريق الوطني المتعدد الأطراف  
 لمبادرة الشفافية في قطاع الصيد - موريتانيا  
 Groupe National Multipartite  
 FiTI-Mauritanie

Fisheries  
 Transparency  
 Initiative

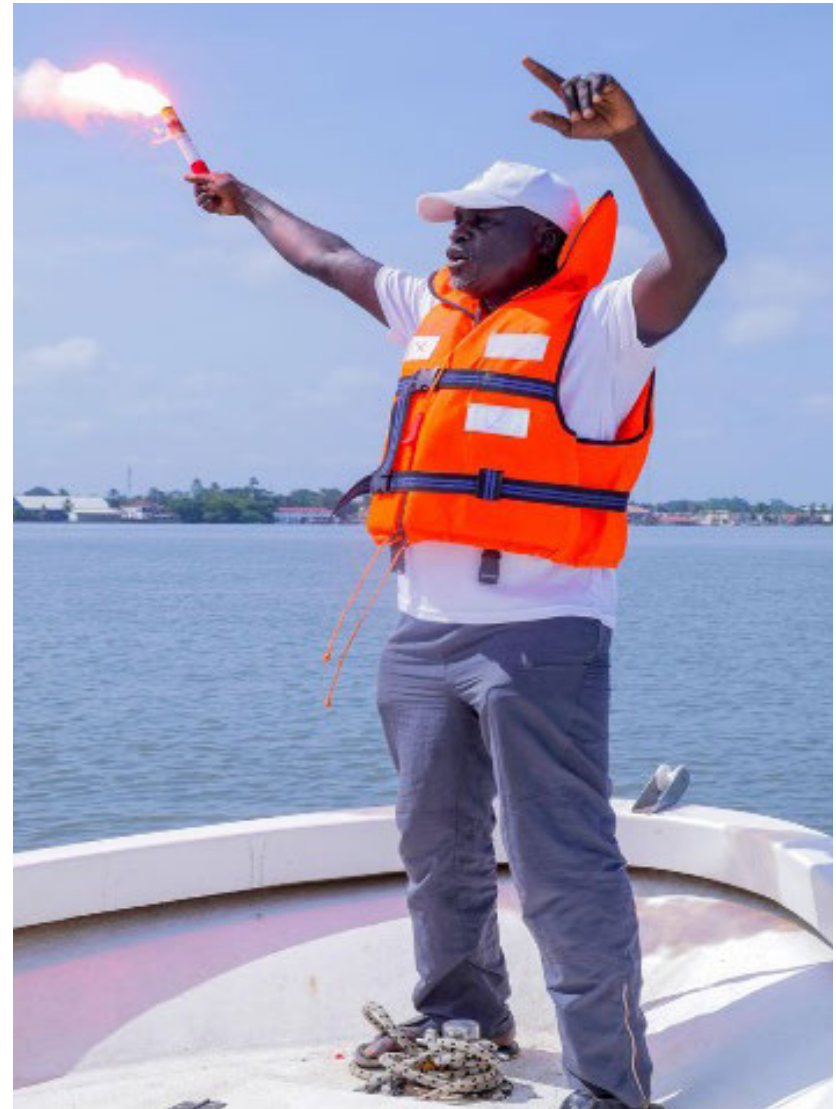
**Rapport de la Mauritanie à  
 l'Initiative pour la Transparence des Pêches (FiTI)  
 Années : 2019 et 2020**

**Rapport détaillé**

Mauritania's 2<sup>nd</sup> FiTI Report (Source: [www.peches.gov.mr](http://www.peches.gov.mr))

### CASE STUDY 3: PARTICIPATORY MONITORING, A REALITY FOR SENEGAL'S MPAS

Training managers and fishermen in charge of surveillance of five MPAs helped strengthen the Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) system in Senegal. Local stakeholders are fully involved in operations carried out on land and at sea on-board boats acquired or renovated through the action plan. This ensures greater safety and security and leads to greater compliance with regulations. The administrative and customary authorities have hailed these action plan achievements.



Demonstration of handheld flare use for a distress situation at sea during Participatory Surveillance in Senegal ©RAMPAO

## KEY IMPACTS

Artisanal fisheries management is improving, thanks to the modernisation and improvement of data collection systems in target countries. Additionally, relevant stakeholder training has improved understanding of the importance of fishery sustainability.

Including small pelagics issues in management plans and capacity building for fisheries stakeholders in Participatory Surveillance has had a positive effect on the MPA's sustainable management of small pelagics.

Finally, national civil society actors are more organised and can better influence political decisions on fisheries governance. A ripple effect of raised awareness is evident - since Mauritania's compliance with FiTI standard, other countries covered under the action plan began process of joining the initiative. Collaboration between partners grows stronger with each joint activity realised.

1. Improving databases has facilitated information exchange between partners.
2. Near real-time data transmission has accelerated fisheries management decisions.
3. Data digitalisation facilitates its replication for fisheries monitoring activities by other donors and in other sectors.
4. MSC sustainable fishing standards training has provided the sub-region with expertise in fisheries certification.
5. Inclusion of small pelagic issues in MPAs has strengthened management measures for these species.
6. Strengthening of Participatory surveillance in MPAs has improved control and compliance.
7. Policy decisions on fisheries governance are increasingly influenced by civil society actors.
8. Collaboration between action plan partners has contributed to a common dynamic in small pelagics management.

## 4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT

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Synergies among the various strategies made collaboration between action plan partners more effective. Going forward, the action plan's encouraging results need to be consolidated through concrete actions and synergies.

To build on our achievements, we have developed a fundraising policy, based on a logical framework elaborated jointly by the action plan partners. Additionally, a memorandum of understanding between the three direct partners, currently in validation process, will strengthen their collaboration and enable them to face new challenges.

These challenges include illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, pollution from off-shore oil and gas activities, climate change, and harmonizing sub-regional management measures. The expanding fishmeal and fish oil industries represent another major fight. To address this last issue, a wider partnership has been established with the financial support of Oceans 5 and MAVA Foundation.

*“In West Africa, millions of men and women depend on small pelagics; contributing to their sustainable management is above all a matter of food sovereignty and human dignity.”*

Marie-Suzanna TRAORE, Executive Secretary of RAMPAO

*“The training sessions on Monitoring, Control and Participatory Surveillance between state services and we local fishermen were exceptional; we understood that if the resource deteriorates, we are the ones who will suffer. I therefore want the fishing stakeholders to unite to move forward.”*

Arona TAMBA, Fisherman/surveillance commission, Niamone Kalounayes MPA

