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WOMEN SHELLFISHERS AND FOOD SECURITY PROJECT

Addressing the need for greater attention to food security for women shellfishers and their families while improving biodiversity conservation of the ecosystems on which their livelihoods depend

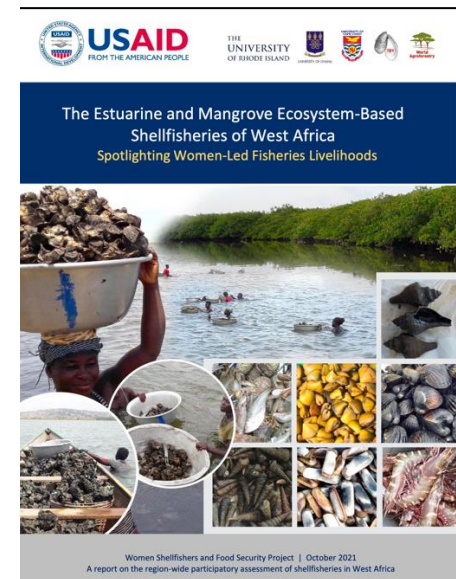
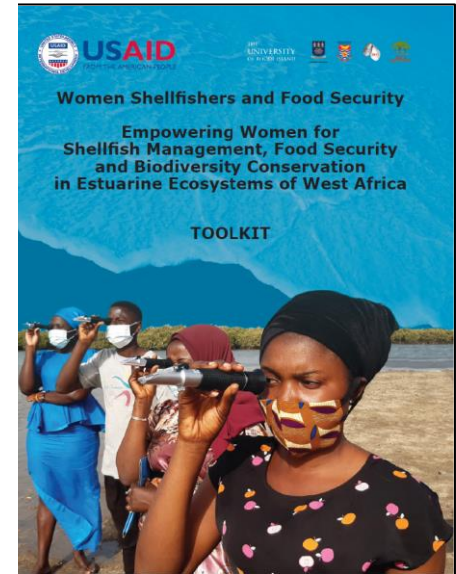
The Women Shellfishers and Food Security project aims to strengthen the evidence base, increase awareness, and equip stakeholders to adapt and apply successful approaches to rights-based, ecosystem-based, participatory co-management of shellfisheries by women in mangrove ecosystems in West Africa.

Results of the first two-year phase of the project starting in September 2020 included:

- The first-ever participatory **regional assessment** of women-led shellfisheries in the 11 coastal West African countries from Nigeria to Senegal available at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00Z67C.pdf.
- Six **technical studies** published on site-based research in Ghana and The Gambia that tested Theory of Change linkages between women's shellfish co-management and livelihoods, mangrove conservation, and nutrition.
- A **community of practice** fostered around development and dissemination of a **toolkit** on women's shellfisheries co-management in West Africa available at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00ZHT6.pdf. See Annex J for 11 individual country assessments and the technical studies.

Over a three-year Phase II starting in September 2022, the project will build on these results to:

- Demonstrate the **biodiversity and socio-economic value** of more fully integrated rights-based co-management of linked shellfish - mangrove - proximate landscape food ecosystems in site-based research in Ghana and The Gambia through activities in:
 - Women shellfishers empowerment
 - Gender sensitive shellfishery co-management
 - Mangrove co-management
 - Integration of adjacent landscape food production systems
- Establish a functional **West Africa Shellfish Knowledge and Outreach Hub** engaging and serving stakeholders in the sub-region.



Theory of Change for site-based research

If implementation of women shellfishers empowerment, shellfishery and mangrove co-management, and adjacent landscape food production systems is integrated, THEN shellfishery and mangrove health, dietary diversity, and shellfisher livelihood resilience will improve.

Phase II Expected Outcomes

The evidence-base for integrated rights-based co-management of linked shellfish and mangrove socio-ecological systems as a driver of biodiversity conservation and socio-economic value is strengthened.

Knowledge on West Africa Shellfisheries co-management is generated, shared, and applied.

Phase II Results

- People trained in sustainable natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation.
- Institutions receiving capacity development support.
- Host country higher education institutions receiving capacity development support.
- Hectares of biologically significant areas under improved natural resource management at two sites in Ghana and two sites in The Gambia.
- Reports showcasing results and lessons learned.



Women oyster harvesters in Benin (top) and The Gambia (bottom)

West Africa Shellfish Knowledge and Outreach Hub Activities

- Establish a regional network
- Social media
- Toolkit extension
- Peer to peer exchange visits/study tours
- Web/data platform
- Advocacy/awareness raising targeting regional institutions
- Regional webinar for policymakers
- Coordination with projects in the sector
- Document linkages to global context

Regional Opportunities/Enabling Conditions

- More than 495,000 hectares of coastal ecosystems with shellfisheries already prioritized for conservation as Ramsar sites (International Convention on Wetlands).
- More than 42,660 women shellfish harvesters and 565,000 direct household beneficiaries.
- More than 30 women shellfisher groups organized at community, ecosystem, and national levels.
- Strong vertical integration of the shellfish value chain with women harvesters dominant at every node. This increases the potential for value chain improvements at any node to incentivize sustainable harvest and ecosystem stewardship by women harvesters.

Project Overview

Duration: 2020-2025

Funding: \$3,191,101

Implementing Partners:

Coastal Resources Center of University of Rhode Island, USA (prime); Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences, URI; World Agroforestry (ICRAF); University of Cape Coast/Center for Coastal Management, Ghana; University of Ghana Dept. of Nutrition and Food Science, Ghana; Development Action Association, Ghana, TRY Oyster Women's Association, The Gambia.

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