

## New Fishery Improvement Project launches in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean

*Alliance-driven FIP will help meet the MSC standard for sustainable fisheries in the region*

**7 July 2017, Accra:** The Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Ivory Coast, WWF, Thai Union Europe and other processing companies, purse seine fleets and their associations, all signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch a tuna Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean. The FIP aims to ensure the fishery will meet the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard allowing it to be certified as being well-managed and sustainable.

The FIP will focus on three key areas – healthy fish stocks, minimal and reversible impact on ecosystems, and effective management of fisheries – and will ensure that best practices are adhered to. The FIP will cover the catches of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna from purse seine vessels. It will also support the recovery plan of the two commercial large tuna species in the region, yellowfin and bigeye tuna as well as ensuring the resolutions and recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) are followed and adhered to with regards to the management of skipjack. The partners in the FIP will work closely with fishing authorities of both Ghana and Ivory Coast, and potentially other neighbouring West African coastal nations, to improve the governance of fisheries in the region.

In consultation with WWF, the signatories of the MoU will begin work immediately to develop a work plan to implement the tuna FIP. The work plan will outline the major activities, improvement areas, course of action and key performance indicators that all partners will have to commit to achieve within the five year timeframe of the FIP.

Working with WWF, fishery managers will use tools developed by the MSC to identify and track areas for improvement for the fishery to meet the MSC Standard. The MSC Fisheries Standard is based on UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries which provides the main guidelines for sustainable fishing, minimising environmental impact and ensuring effective management.

Mrs. Elizabeth Naa Afoley Quaye, Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Republic of Ghana: “Ghana has significant and valuable fish stocks and a strong tradition and culture of fishing, and as many as 2.2 million people are dependent on the fisheries sector for their livelihoods. As most of Ghana’s fish resources are heavily exploited, we have taken active steps to overcome the issue. The implementation of the Eastern Atlantic Ocean tuna Fishery Improvement Project demonstrates our commitment to improving the sustainable management of fish and aquatic resources in the West Africa sub-region.”

Mr. Kobenan Kouassi Adjoumani, Minister for Livestock and Fishery Resources, Republic of Ivory Coast:  
“The blue economy is a key economic strategy for Ivory Coast, as well as all other West African nations. It is part of Africa’s future, and we need to start implementing initiatives to ensure the sustainable future of fisheries in the region. Being part of the Eastern Atlantic Ocean tuna Fishery Improvement Project will help us ensure that we are protecting tuna stock levels, and ensure sustainable tuna fishing for the future.”

Tracy Cambridge, Fisheries and Seafood Manager, WWF UK:

“Looking to the future, ensuring the sustainability of tuna stocks in the Eastern Atlantic is important for livelihoods and the entire ocean ecosystem. This collaboration between industry, governments and other stakeholders with the shared vision of improving the target stock health, ecosystem health and management of the fishery makes this initiative truly exciting.”

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### **Notes to editors**

#### **About the Eastern Atlantic Ocean Tuna Fishery Improvement Project (FIP):**

The Eastern Atlantic Ocean Tuna Fishery Improvement Project is an alliance-driven initiative to help the commercial tuna purse seine fishery in the region meet the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainability standard. The Eastern Atlantic Ocean FIP is supported by the following partners:

#### **Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):**

1. Republic of Ghana
2. Republic of Ivory Coast
3. WWF
4. Thai Union Europe
5. TOG
6. Ghana Tuna Association & Associates
7. ANABAC & Associates
8. OPAGAC & Associates
9. ORTHONGEL & Associates

#### **About WWF**

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.



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