

## FOOD & BUSINESS APPLIED RESEARCH FUND

### [IMPROVING THE RESILIENCE OF THE INLAND FISHER COMMUNITIES AND AQUATIC SYSTEMS TO OVERFISHING AND WATER RESOURCE DEGRADATION – BENIN]

#### Consortium Members

**Frejus Thoto**, Project Coordinator | Actions pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable (ACED)

**Ben Sonneveld**, Researcher | Centre for World Food Studies of the VU University of Amsterdam (SOW-VU)

**Philippe Laleye**, Researcher | Laboratory of Hydrobiology and Aquaculture of the University of Abomey-Calavi (LHA/UAC)

#### Project description

The overall objective of the project is to explore the vulnerability of the inland fishing sector to the increasing pressure on water resources that is caused by a mounting population, pollution from urban areas and climate change.

We use a multidisciplinary approach where biophysical conditions, socio-economic characteristics and institutions are formally integrated to analyse the resilience and food security situation of the fisher communities.

In the end, the project expects a sustainable use of water resources for inland fishing with increased resilience against external factors that should increase fish production and improve livelihoods of fishers' communities (men and women).

#### Impact activities and preliminary results

##### Activities

- Kick-off workshop with stakeholders (researchers, practitioners, fishermen)
- Literature review, questionnaires development and data collection
- Study on the impact of water degradation on fishery production potential
- Technical and market analysis of new/improved techniques
- Development of Research Papers/Policy Briefs
- Workshop on regulatory rules of shared water resources for inland fishing
- Workshop on extension materials produced for new/improved techniques

##### Preliminary results

- A multi-stakeholder committee has been established during the inception workshop to exchange information and participate in the research activities
- 841 fishermen and 227 women involved in fishery activities were surveyed. Data collected encompass formal rules, ownership, rules sharing water resources, fish trading and constraints and mitigation
- The average values of physic-chemical parameters of the two lagoons complex are as follows: Depth: 0.7-3.2 m; Transparency: 0.21-0.89 m; Temperature: 25.9-27.30C; pH: 6.15-7.57; Dissolved oxygen: 4.6 mg/l-5.2 mg/l; Salinity: 0.5 g/l -16 g/l
- A total of 45 fish species distributed in 39 genera belonging to 28 families were recorded in the complex
- Fish fauna of the complex Nokoué-Lake/Lagoon Porto-Novo experiences a high stress due to the anthropogenic activities

#### Opportunities and challenges

Benin has recently elected a new President with a new government. Some changes may happen in the institutional framework and governance of the inland fishery sector and are likely to influence the implementation of the project. This is quite relevant to the project as it relates to formal and informal regulations in the fishery sector. Therefore institutional changes may positively or negatively influence the implementation and/or results of the project. The consortium members are closely monitoring these changes and will adapt the project accordingly to keep the momentum on achieving the expected results.

