

Call for Proposals: External Evaluator for the Our Fish / Notre Poisson Programme

Background

'Our Fish' is a three-year program, which has started in October 2022 and will end in September 2025. It is mainly funded by Oceans 5, an international funders' collaborative as well as the MAVA Foundation. The project is implemented by a consortium of organisations consisting of Feedback Global (lead), Feedback EU (coordination), Lancaster University, DeSmog, Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas in West Africa (RAMPAO), the West African Association for the Development of Artisanal Fisheries (WADAF), the Subregional Fisheries Commission.

With industrial fishing decimating wild fish populations through overexploitation and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, aquaculture production – today, the world's fastest-growing food production system – is being widely promoted as a sustainable alternative. However, many farmed fish rely on marine ingredients (in the form of fishmeal and fish oil - FMFO) to develop. Since the 1980s, the growth of fed aquaculture (e.g., salmon, trout, shrimp farming), which is reliant on inputs such as wild fish for feed, has outpaced that of non-fed aquaculture (FAO, 2020). Added to this, the livestock industry (pigs and chickens) also uses fishmeal to sustain its growth.

As a result, global demand for FMFO remains high. Each year, around one-fifth of the world's annual marine catch (in 2018: 18 million tonnes) is used to produce FMFO (FAO, 2020), the bulk of which goes to producing feed for the rapidly growing aquaculture industry (Naylor et al., Nature 2020). To satisfy its growing appetite for fish, in recent years, the international FMFO industry has expanded into West Africa, focusing on Mauritania where, in 2020, fish oil exports exceeded 75,000 tonnes and fishmeal reached 121,000 tonnes, putting the country into the top 10 producers worldwide. Expansion has also been seen into the fishing nations of Senegal and The Gambia. In the past decade, the number of FMFO factories in West Africa has increased from 5 to 49 (Greenpeace, 2019, Greenpeace & Changing Markets, 2021, FAO 2022).

Each year, over half a million tonnes of fish—which could feed over 33 million people in the region—are instead extracted from the ocean and converted into FMFO to feed farmed fish and livestock. Europe and Norway are the major importers of fish oil and Asia consumes fishmeal (Greenpeace & Changing Markets, 2021). Virtually all FMFO produced in West Africa is exported for the benefit of other sectors.

As some of the target fish are migratory and widely consumed in countries without an Atlantic coastline, the industrial scale of the fishmeal industry in West Africa is driving up prices of fish sold across several West African markets, including inland, impacting food security, dispossessing local populations of livelihoods and food and threatening the survival of one of the most productive segments of several West African economies. Particularly impacted are fishing communities – women processors, fishmongers, and people working in the artisanal fishing sector – who exclusively depend on marine resources.

The financial investments ultimately driving increased fishing for and processing of FMFO in West Africa, like much of the fishing in the region, remain opaque (CFFA, 2021). Yet, it is these investments that are driving biodiversity decline (Galaz et al, 2015) and rerouting the supply of nutrients critical for human health away from populations that need them (Nash et al, 2022). In the same way, global supply chains remain shockingly opaque. Global aquafeed companies' claims to be sourcing ethically from the region are currently impossible to verify – all empirical, anecdotal evidence collected by groups such as the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA, 2022; CFFA, 2022) suggests standards (e.g. steps towards certification) are not being met.

Objectives & Project Outcomes

Objective 1. Improve transparency of finance driving the exploitation of the small Pelagic fishery and FMFO industry in West Africa [Lead: Lancaster University, natural partners: DeSmog, Greenpeace, RAMP AO, Feedback]

When it comes to fisheries, a lack of transparency is the first complaint of fish workers, journalists, and even government officials. The finance that drives fishing, processing, and the broader supply chain is often left out of efforts to improve transparency. Yet international finance in fishing, processing, and trade is notoriously opaque. We aim to improve transparency of investment and finance in West Africa's small pelagic fisheries by drawing on critical and forensic accounting methods; the outputs will then be fed into Objectives 2, 3, 4 & 5.

Objective 2: Build a robust body of evidence spotlighting the realities underpinning FMFO production in West Africa, to be used in targeted corporate and policy campaigns [Lead: Feedback, partners DeSmog, CAOPA, GP.]

While various initiatives are in place to set rules around what 'sustainable sourcing' looks like in West Africa (transparency initiatives, Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) in Mauritania, Global Roundtable on Marine Ingredients, Aquaculture Stewardship Council), nearly all the players involved already have skin in the game, representing deeply embedded vested interests. This gives legitimate cause for concern about the quality and integrity of the standards they set. To help improve the robustness of any policy protections, we seek to scrutinize the rules that are in place and measure these against the reality on the ground by publishing at least one major exposé/investigation per year in the European and/or West African press. We will also work to ensure this information can effectively be used by those who seek to drive policy change.

Objective 3: Build grassroots capacity to act on information and advocate on the need to address the impacts of FMFO [Lead: Greenpeace Africa (1st year)/RAMP AO (2nd and 3rd year), natural partners: PRCM (and WADAF), Feedback]

Lack of information and organization constitute an obstacle for fishing communities to take advantage of their activities and rights. To achieve this objective, we will build capacity of fishing actors on fisheries issues

(including FMFO industry issues, such as the flows of finance and international investment, the prevalence of misinformation, and links to IUU fishing, overexploitation, and biodiversity loss). We will improve their knowledge of their rights on fisheries issues, and work with them to illuminate the drivers (e.g., international finance) and actions (e.g., supplying FMFO with fresh whole fish) that undermine their livelihoods to empower fishers to break these dynamics and not sell to the FMFO factories, though some artisanal fishermen do. In Senegal, The Gambia and Mauritania, there are local actors who are actively fighting against these factories, including local fishing groups, and individual fishermen who are increasingly aware of the problems underpinning this industry, which we can use as a leverage to address this issue. In this regard, we aim to raise awareness among fishermen on sustainable resource management of resources and the absurdity of wanting to feed the fish of the rich with the fish of the poor! As part of this, we will equip and support vulnerable communities with the relevant tools and means to ensure they can assert their rights before the relevant administrations or courts if necessary.

Objective 4: Support effective policy decisions at regional and national levels, and reinforce protection of shared pelagic fish stocks [Lead: RAMPAO, natural partners: SRFC, CAOPA, WADAF, GP]

Given that several of the stocks of concern here are shared stocks, working towards the regional management of small pelagic fish will be key to this approach. Data collection by countries must be harmonized. One key area of influence will be the SRFC, where we will try to get 'sustainable exploitation' as an agenda point and push for harmonization of monitoring of fish stocks. We will have a parallel strategy targeting Members of Parliament in Mauritania, Senegal and The Gambia working to get our policy goals encoded into law and encouraging the adoption by all of the best practices of the other (e.g., Senegal bans the use of whole fish but places no limit on production; Mauritania has a law to limit production, but it is not enforced etc.). At the same time, we will also push for the reinforcement of the protection of shared ecological stocks. The West Africa regional [Atlas](#) of critical sites for small pelagic fish stocks has been mapped thanks to the collaborative efforts of RAMPAO and SRFC, and can be drawn upon to make a strong argument for putting a set of protections and management measures in each critical site newly identified and existing at each country level (i.e., improvement of fishing regulations and measures in existing and new MPAs), to lay the foundation of a regional dynamic towards effective management policies of small pelagic fish stocks.

Ultimately, drawing on Objectives 1, 2, and 3, and in providing new and transparent evidence, we will support government representatives and decision-makers to balance economic and financial priorities, against ecological, food security, and livelihood needs.

Objective 5: Ensure an effective, engaged community of actors continue to work in partnership to guarantee the health of small pelagic fish stocks in West Africa during and beyond the project. [Lead: RAMPAO, natural partners: SRFC, PRCM]

Since 2018, the West African community of actors composed of SRFC, PRCM, RAMPAO, small-scale fishing associations (WADAF, CAOPA), the Departments in charge of the fisheries of West African countries

(Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea) and their national fishing research institutes have been working together to reinforce the sustainable exploitation of small pelagic fish stocks in West African waters under the MAVA Small Pelagic Fish Stocks project. Beyond the synergies they have built in addressing the issue of overfishing, this community of actors have successfully conducted common media campaigns together, which have involved television and radio broadcasts, international media interviews, and targeted [social media](#) campaigns. Here, with support from MAVA, this regional partnership will be consolidated, and their common action plan implemented.

Methodology & Expertise

We are seeking an External Evaluator to conduct an evaluation of this 3-year programme of work to determine how this project has reached its objectives. The methodology will include a desk-based review and interviews with key informants internally and externally. We are seeking proposals from skilled evaluators, ideally with experience in campaigning, corporate influencing and/or policy and advocacy in the environmental sector as well as proficiency in French.

Outputs & Timescale

The evaluation is intended to take the form of a report on the extent to which the project has reached its objectives as detailed above. This will include a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of how effective the project has been and recommendations for future projects.

To best incorporate learnings from this report into future planning, Feedback envisages the timeline as follows:

February 2025: start the evaluation

June 2025: draft report

August 2025: final report

Proposal Submission & Selection process

Please submit a proposal covering:

- A brief CV / summary of your relevant experience, and cover letter. (2 pages max)
- A proposal outlining how you would approach this work, what experience or resources you would draw on, and what you envisage the key challenges would be. Please include your availability to deliver this work. (2 pages max)
- An itemised budget including your time and any additional costs.

Deadline: 26th of January 2025

Proposals for this work will be assessed by at least three members of the group. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview where they will be asked to pitch their proposal.

For further information or a discussion, please contact Yves Reichling, Project Manager at Feedback EU (yves@feedbackglobal.org) and Natasha Hurley, Director of Campaigns at Feedback Global (natasha@feedbackglobal.org).