



Stakeholder Collaboration in the Nouadhibou Eco-Seafood Cluster for Jobs, Growth and Quality

It takes a village to launch an inclusive fisheries strategy

Since 2016, a fisheries private sector strategy grounded in the heart of Mauritania's fisheries sector – the Nouadhibou Free Zone – and supported by CIIP and the associated IDA project has brought together public, private, and vulnerable stakeholders to improve the investment climate in order to reduce red tape, drive infrastructure investments for fish processing and fresh fish export, boost competitiveness and firm performance, and foster dialogue. Results, among others, include the creation of more than 930 new jobs and 314 new firms, the support of 75 existing SMEs and the training of 806 people.

CHALLENGE

Mauritania – and specifically Nouadhibou – is recognized as one of the richest regions for fisheries in the world and has exported abundant quantities of fish over the years. Nevertheless, resource management has not been sustainable, resulting in both over- and under-exploitation of fish stocks. Moreover, the sector continues to generate low value-added. Foreign vessels catch the lion's share of fish at sea and export it without ever landing on Mauritanian shores thereby failing to add any value to both the local and national economy. The lack of labor-intensive, onshore activities in Nouadhibou fails to capitalize on the fisheries' potential for the economy. It is also a missed opportunity to generate decent jobs in a country that desperately needs them, particularly for youth and women, and to contribute to food security in the country. The main barriers to the development of fisheries in Nouadhibou include poor urban management, limited and outdated port landing facilities, an unskilled workforce, and uncompetitive firms that lack the capacity to guarantee and certify quality to foreign markets.

APPROACH

CIIP supported the design and implementation of the Nouadhibou Eco-Seafood Cluster (NESC) project which combines the design and implementation of the Eco-seafood Cluster Strategy, support to local firms, and public-private dialogue (PPD) platforms for collaboration and supply chain networks.

This approach was underpinned by innovations and a series of "firsts" for the country and the fisheries sector. Among these is the first fresh fish export facility and seafood PPD in Mauritania. Using the convening power of the World Bank, CIIP and the IDA project sought to build productive dialogue between the Government, private sector and civil society. The private sector plays a key role in the economy, yet the country's post-independence state-driven model has limited the participation of businesses in policymaking that affects them. A functional PPD platform was therefore a key priority for the project. The regular collaboration and coherence between all participants ensured ownership, contribution, and efficiency in the design and implementation of the Eco-Seafood Cluster Strategy.

PARTNERS

The Bank team works closely with the public agency governing the Nouadhibou Free Zone – the Nouadhibou Free Zone Authority (ANZF), implicating them for engaging the private sector through workshops, the development of the Cluster Strategy and Seafood Taskforce, and developing and financing crucial infrastructure. Partnership with the ANZF across all activities is crucial to the project's goal of fostering better public-private dialogue and government engagement in supporting private sector development and its role in generating employment and reducing poverty in the country. Technical partners in Nouadhibou include the Naval Academy, the Mauritanian Oceanographic and Fisheries Research Institute (IMROP) and the certification authority ONISPA and have informed research and analysis. Key development partners for implementation have been the EU Promo Pêche program, with a budget of over US\$ 30 million to reinforce the artisanal fisheries sector and provide better jobs to youth and women (implemented by the ILO, the GIZ and AECID). The German Development Bank (KfW), meanwhile, is providing US\$10 million in infrastructure investments at the artisanal port. AFD continues to provide technical assistance support on PPPs and Japan to the investment climate through Bank TF.



RESULTS

As of 2018, CIIP support and project interventions have generated US\$59.2 million in private investments in Nouadhibou, creating 937 stable jobs, predominantly on the labor-intensive, processing side of the industry. 314 new firms have registered via the Nouadhibou Free Zone one-stop shop, and CIIP has helped supervise or provide 1,672 days of training and technical assistance workshops to 806 people. Support to businesses and civil servants included two workshops in Nouadhibou in May 2016 on quality regulations and standards (79 attendees) and a knowledge-exchange mission on fisheries resource management, enhancing the value of fisheries and local spillovers to Namibia in March 2017 (12 participants from government, private sector and civil society). In terms of value addition and inclusion impacts of project activities, the Free Zone is now exporting more than six times more fresh fish since the project was launched (5,854 tons). Fresh fish for export first lands in Nouadhibou, connecting small-scale fishermen and informal processors and traders (generally women) to the value chain. In addition, fresh fish exports do not go through the government's monopolistic trading company for frozen fish, thereby fostering private-to-private logistics links between small-scale fishing actors and exporters.

Engagement with private sector stakeholders and public servants has been reinforced by CIIP-financed technical assistance at the policy level, as evidenced especially by the approval of the Seafood Cluster Strategy in 2017 and the public financing of essential infrastructure to implement the Strategy, such as a new deep-water port, wastewater treatment and desalination plants, and a cold storage area in Nouadhibou airport. Cross-stakeholder buy-in was ensured thanks to a series of workshops on the Cluster Strategy involving 76 key people, as well as the Seafood Task Force – the first of its kind for Mauritania's seafood sector and the first PPD platform in the country in more than 10 years. Despite Mauritania's historic lack of public-private dialogue, the Seafood Task Force has in just three years successfully enacted three major reforms. The first draft decree for establishing judicial and institutional frameworks for PPPs was approved in January 2017- a testament to what can be achieved even at the local and sectoral level.

On the inclusion agenda, the CIIP team has developed preliminary studies on supporting women in fisheries in the Free Zone and launching a community radio for artisanal fishermen. The gender report highlighted the opportunities and constraints faced by women in fisheries, as well as their role in the post-harvest value chain, providing the chance to raise awareness among Government and development partners.

MOVING FORWARD

The follow-on CIIP grant will implement inclusion activities to expand the local populations' productivity, generate private investment, and create linkages with the formal economy, thereby enhancing its resilience and economic opportunities. Capitalizing on research financed by CIIP, the key beneficiaries will be women and small-scale fishermen, who make up the bulk of informal economic actors in the Free Zone's artisanal fisheries sector. Women will benefit from training in artisanal processing, socio-emotional skills, mentoring and small grants. Artisanal fishermen onshore and at sea, meanwhile, will be connected to information in local languages, from weather warnings to health and safety and other best practices.

WBG CONTRIBUTION

Both the original project and Additional Financing (AF) are financed primarily in the form of an IDA grant (US\$7.75 million and US\$8 million respectively), with counterpart funding under the original project and AF by the Mauritanian Government of US\$1.50 million and US\$1 million respectively for activities not financed by the IDA grant. The NESG has also benefitted from two rounds of CIIP funding of US\$ 420,000 (2015) and US\$ 200,000 (2019). These CIIP grants helped pave the way for the recently-approved AF by generating stronger project results and client engagement – all underpinned by CIIP-financed research. Legal and institutional support to PPP agenda was financed by the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF) TF supported by 15 donors in addition to the Bank, while the Korean Green Growth Partnership TF financed US\$1.1 million from the Government of South Korea for the development of the Eco-Seafood Cluster. The Mauritania Investment Climate Program TF supported by the Government of Japan financed complementary investment climate activities to build reform momentum.

