

Application for Membership in the Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PRNFAA)

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is a Specialized Technical Office of the African Union Commission (AUC) under the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA). AU-IBAR has the mandate to coordinate, support, provide leadership and empower AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for the development and utilization of animal resources (including fisheries, aquaculture, livestock and wildlife) for the wellbeing of the member states of the African Union.

The AU-IBAR in line with the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS), as adopted by the African Heads of State and Government, is currently implementing an EU funded project on '**Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Enhance Governance of the Fisheries Sector in Africa**'. The project is targeted at utilizing fisheries and aquaculture sector for improved livelihoods, food security and economic growth. Consistent with the policy provisions of the PFRS on Awareness Enhancing and Human-capacity Development, one of the key result areas of the specific objective of the project is to Enhance Advocacy, Lessons Learning for Knowledge Sharing and Capacity for Increased Returns from Fisheries and Access to Market. This component of the project is designed to support high level advocacy fora, ensures that lessons and practices of efforts to reform fisheries governance at national and regional levels are collected, collated, documented and widely disseminated. This specific objective was envisioned to be achieved through the implementation of a number of specific activities and actions one of which is to establish a Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa. This action is envisaged to strengthen capacity for evidence based advocacy.

. The **Policy Research Network For Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa** (PRNFA) is being established as the first continental fisheries policy research network, specifically designed to collate, share and process all available knowledge, information and data currently being compiled by national and regional institutions to provide continental-level scientific information for informed decisions at all levels in Africa as a whole. The network is also designed to support high level advocacy fora, ensures that lessons and practices of efforts to reform fisheries governance at national and regional levels are documented and widely disseminated. The Network for Policy Research for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa will cover oceanography and fisheries science, economics, governance and policy research to support the continental efforts in harnessing the sustainable use of fisheries and aquaculture resources in Africa. The network would create the necessary space for interaction between academic, private and private sector, including NSAs, industry practitioners etc and more importantly bridging the gap between policy, research and development.

1.1 Rationale

The absence of linkages or information sharing amongst specialized institutions or experts for enhancing African fisheries governance and aquaculture development is a cause for concern. Institutionalizing a network of expert, institutions and individuals or industry practitioners under one platform would facilitate galvanizing them to crossbreed ideas; exchange and share research findings; disseminate information; harness and harmonize contradictory policy research findings as well as proffer ways to reach consensus for the benefits of African fisheries and aquaculture sector.

This apparent gap in African fisheries management and aquaculture development was recognized by African Ministers during CAMFAI in 2010, at Banjul, The Gambia which charged African Union to assist Member States to constitute "Fish Expert Pools". This is also in consistence with the outcomes of the CAMFA II, 2014 in Addis Ababa which recognized the crucial role of research, science, technology and extension in transforming fisheries and aquaculture for sustainable production and productivity. The absence of linkages between policy researchers in the continent, absence of information flow between industry and academia, weak networking etc. are major issues confronting natural resources management, not least the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The existing networks are more subject specific focused and despite their existence, there is a felt need for enhancing sector management based on inputs across a wide range spectrum of stakeholders.

Enhancing awareness and human capacity development is also an important policy objective in the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PPFRS). One of the expected outcomes under this policy pillar is the capacity to generate and apply knowledge for responsible management of fisheries and aquaculture. Therefore the establishment of a policy research network for fisheries and aquaculture is conceived as a transition phase that will lead to the establishment of a full constituted organization with a physical location.

In view of the continental mandate of AU-IBAR in animal resources development, including fisheries, AU-IBAR developed a framework for establishment of a policy research network for fisheries and aquaculture to cover the five regions of Africa. Thereafter views and inputs of stakeholders were solicited as follows::

1. The framework was presented to stakeholders in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire 2015 for comments, inputs and validation
2. Specifically the network was launched at a forum of expert consultative workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in September 2017. The criteria for composition of memberships were reviewed and agreed.
3. At the Nairobi expert meeting, the roadmap for operationalization of the network was developed, including the constitution of membership based on the agreed criteria.

Sequel to the above, stakeholders in a recent meeting in Nairobi formally launched the FPRNA, adopted the membership criteria and mandated the AU-IBAR to initiate the process of operationalizing the network by advertising for application for membership to the network. Further to this AU-IBAR is to inaugurate the Network in the first quarter of 2018 with the first 50 successful applicants as the Foundation Members of the Network.

1.2 Objective

The main objective of the Network is to contribute to the effective implementation of the policy reform objectives of the PFRS through the conduct of more cohesive and better focused evidence-based, high quality research agenda.

The Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa provides and facilitates;

- Easy access to information on Fisheries Policy reform and development matters in Africa;
- Reaches institutions, organizations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors relevant to fisheries policy development and reform in Africa;
- Advancement of co-operation between members in identifying and promoting the need for research related to Fisheries Policy Development in Africa, to encourage joint ventures in undertaking research, and to disseminate information about members' research programmes;

- Liaison to promote information exchange relating to Fisheries policy development and reform in Africa, and to foster general debate about relevant trends and issues;
- Dissemination and sharing of information to develop best practice through training and professional development in provision for and management of Fisheries policy development and reform in Africa;

Membership is open to the broad categories of individuals, scholars and institutions that actively contribute to the research development of Fisheries Policy Development and Reform in Africa. There are four kinds of proposed members: institutional, individual, student or young professionals and honorary. More details on the vision, mission objectives, core functions and can be read in the 'Report for the Establishment of a Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa' by Professor Benedict P. Satia for the African Union on the AU-IBAR Website

2. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PRNFAA) is defined as fisheries and aquaculture research institutions in Africa as well as foreign institutions that are involved in fisheries and aquaculture policy research in Africa with every efforts to ensure regional, discipline and gender balance in the composition of membership.

The first 50 research-experts who fulfil the requisite requirements and institutions upon application consecutive to the launch of the Network shall constitute the "core members". Other members shall be added on the basis of the definition of Membership and **other additional criteria** that shall be developed by the Foundation or Core Members of the Network.

Participation in the PRNFAA is also suggested to be based upon due considerations of application, at specified cost, and focused on innovative Fisheries policy Research development and reform in Africa in line with the principles of Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRA).

Individuals or institutions interested in joining the Network should review the membership benefits and responsibilities, criteria send their detailed functions (for institutions) or CVs (for individuals) and then complete a **Membership Application Form**. The Network Secretariat shall then contact them regarding their membership eligibility. However, it is provided below the proposed basic requirements and criteria for becoming a member in the 3 specified categories.

3. CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

PRNFAA membership shall spans across industries, institutions and professions to continue fostering a valuable membership experience, ensuring a quality exchange, and representative influence, the proposed PRNFAA four membership categories are:

- i. Individual Membership;
- ii. Institutional Membership;
- iii. Student or Young Professional Membership.
- iv. Honorary Membership

3.2 Individual Membership

Individual memberships are qualified experts who represent themselves primarily (ad persona) and not their institutions. It is expected that the individuals shall drive the network - provide leadership, do the research and the training and attend meetings. Such a core group of "regulars" who are able to commit to repeated participation in the network activities would contribute to the continuity and cohesiveness of the network.

It is therefore suggested that Individual membership is open to scholars who either carry out Fisheries Policy research and Development and Reform in Africa and/or outside the continent but relevant to Africa, teach Fisheries policy and reform in Africa and and/or outside the continent but relevant to Africa ; have Fisheries policy and reform in Africa jobs,

are members of relevant national and international associations, or have academic degrees and training in Fisheries policy and reform from recognized institutions in Africa and/or outside the Africa continent.

3.1 Institutional Membership

Institutional membership is considered very important because these institutions are closer or directly linked to government, are funded by governments and in principle constitute the natural conduit to influence policy. In addition, institutional membership shall bring into the network institutional commitment which could be vital in maintaining a sustainable stream of competent experts to the policy research network. Institutions with strong relationships and collaboration with non-African institutions could also attract increased donors support to address issues the local institution in isolation may not be competent to handle but in partnership with the Network (critical mass) may better address the challenge or issue.

3.3 Students or Young Professional Membership

The Network also provides the institution of "Young Professional Membership" category. These are young graduates with at least Master's Degree in Fisheries economics, fisheries biology, fisheries science, aquaculture, law of the sea or related fields with less than ten years of working experience. They should be highly motivated, be recommended by a Member of the Network and demonstrate competence through peer-reviewed publications.

Furthermore there is the need to strengthen the capacity of experts' especially young professionals with some willingness to mentor such candidates.

3.3 Honorary Membership

Honorary Membership Award would be bestowed on annual basis to individuals who have made outstanding personal contributions towards the objectives of the Network and in general to the development of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa. They do not have to be a member or part of a member to the network to be nominated.

Honorary Membership will be awarded to one person each year and as agreed upon by A Special Committee. The Special Committee will decide by majority vote of the members at its meeting. Committee reserves the right to either make no awards or multiple awards, depending on the quality of the nominations received. Nominators must be a Member of the PRNFAA. Nominations must be in writing and exhibit how the individual meets at least one of the criteria listed section 4.4 below and should also include the following:

1. Name of Nominator and contact details
2. The name of the Nominees and their contact details
3. Details of why the Special Committee should award them honorary memberships

Successful Honorary Members shall be required to confirm in writing to the Secretariat that they are willing to become members of the Network.

4. MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA /REQUIREMENTS

The PRNFAA will accept individuals and institutions with the qualifications outlined below to join the Research Network;

4.1 Institution

The following are expected from the institutions:

Membership to the network is defined as fisheries and aquaculture research institutions in Africa as well as foreign institutions that are involved in fisheries and aquaculture policy research in Africa and shall;

- i. Support the mission, goals, and objectives of the Network in order to strengthen fisheries policy development in Africa;
- ii. Follow Network communications and provide inputs, suggestions, and comments in a timely manner when requested and at any other time that the member states and institutions deem constructive;

- iii. Cooperate with the Network and member institutions and AU MS whenever possible such as in information exchanges, responding to requests for information, and collaborating on work programs;
- iv. Designate a Point of Contact (POC) to represent the institution. The POC's name and contact information will be posted on the Network website and updated regularly in order to facilitate communication between members and with the Network and other members. The POC will serve as a liaison between the institution, other members and the Network Secretariat in order to distribute and share information and communications or requests for information from other members. In addition, the POC will be responsible for sharing information from their institution to the Network Secretariat or other members.

Institutional Members must fulfil the following criteria for membership:

- a. Record of involvement in training/education of leaders and practitioners in fisheries
- b. Evidence of planning, management or policy development and reform in Fisheries;
- c. Playing significant role in funding in fisheries
- d. Must agree to work within the terms of reference for PRNFAA activities.
- e. Should have the ability to develop networking opportunities across agencies and countries including joint research projects
- f. Should have national or regional perspective on and active engagement with relevant issues for fisheries and/or aquaculture development
- g. Proven evidence of an established fisheries and/or aquaculture research program;
- h. Capacity contribute to the work of the network (e.g., depositing data; submitting critical papers,)
- i. Abide by the precepts of the PRNFAA Mission Statement
- j. Willingness to be re-evaluated every 4 years to see if conditions for institution's membership are still being met

4.2 Individual

Individual membership of the PRNFAA shall constitute qualified individuals both Africans and non-Africans who are;

- i. Holder of at least a post graduate degree in fisheries economics, fisheries biology, fisheries science, aquaculture, law or related fields with at least ten (10) years of experience; is
- ii. Actively involved in fisheries and aquaculture policy research,
- iii. Have published at least five (5) peer reviewed articles in policy research and willing to be part of the network on the one hand and
- iv. Should be representatives of knowledge users, policy advocates and the private sector having standing and authority in their respective regions and willing to rise above their national identity.
- v. Professionals holding an advanced degree, who have a research or public policy interest in issues relevant to the African fisheries and/or development;
- vi. Administrators and professional staff of research or policy-oriented fisheries advocacy groups who work in these areas and have significant research or public policy experience
- vii. A full-time university or college faculty member making a significant contribution to the fisheries and/or aquaculture field.
- viii. Consultants or Leaders at the partner/principal level who influence the direction of their own company or their clients' companies, and who directly contribute to the fisheries policy development in Africa as a profession.
- ix. Other leaders and non-fisheries executive such as vendor, funding agency, recruiter or leader from another profession who have a major role in matters impacting fisheries direction in Africa.
- x. Agree to adhere to a strict policy objectives of the network;

4.3 Students or Young Professional Membership Criteria

Students are accepted to join PRNFAA through one of the affiliate institutions around the world but shall be;

- i. Graduate students working towards an advanced degree, who have a research or public policy interest in issues relevant to the Fisheries and/or aquaculture Policy reform and development in Africa.
- ii. Undergraduate Students must have completed 3years of the fisheries and/or aquaculture curriculum.
- iii. Meet the expectation of academic integrity and achieve academic excellence.

4.4 Honorary Membership Criteria

For the honorary membership to be awarded, the person being proposed must meet at least one of the criteria listed below.

- i. An outstanding professional, with established reputation in fisheries and aquaculture, who has made significant contributions to the knowledge in the fisheries and aquaculture discipline, to be substantiated by credentials.
- ii. Made outstanding personal contributions towards the objectives of the Network and in general to the development of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa.
- iii. Played a significant role in the mentoring of at least 2 to 5 renowned professionals/experts in the development of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa.
- iv. A significant technical contribution to development of the PRNFAA leading to new opportunities.
- v. Through a major innovative and motivational leadership role in fisheries and aquaculture contributing to the PRNFAA
- vi. Any other criteria deemed necessary for this position and proposed by Foundation or Core Members of the Network

5. METHOD OF APPLICATION

Apply using the online form available on the AU-IBAR website.