



Policy Briefs

The purpose of these Policy Briefs is to ensure effective dissemination of information collected and generated as a result of the World Bank-funded Study of Good Management Practice in Sustainable Fisheries, the ACP Fish II Feasibility Study (EC), and a Workshop on Fiscal Reform in Fisheries (DFID and GTZ).

World Bank Study

During 2003, the project 'Study of Good Management Practice in Sustainable Fisheries' was undertaken by SIFAR with funding from the World Bank. This resulted in an initial (brief) report followed by the substantive report which have contributed to a recent internal World Bank process aimed at justifying future investments in fisheries sector development.

EC ACP Fish II Feasibility Study

During 2002/2003 SIFAR/FAO undertook a feasibility study on behalf of the European Commission (European Aid Cooperation Office - AIDCO). This comprised an extensive consultation process with fisheries sector participants from over 60 ACP countries, together with the preparation of a range of major project proposals covering capacity building for more effective fisheries management in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

3. Institutional capacity-building for success in fisheries management

Overview

Institutions matter for fisheries management. Working towards success in fisheries management requires consideration of many factors, but the underpinning role of appropriate institutions is fundamental to the process. Without strong, capable institutions fisheries management cannot hope to work towards success. While institutional capacity-building is relevant to all fisheries, there appears to be greatest need in developing countries where institutions are often new and untried, or weak and in need of further assistance.

Key issues

INSTITUTIONS AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Despite the dominance of scientific and technical approaches to fisheries management in many parts of the world, there is increasing recognition of the need to broaden perspectives and to include multi-disciplinary information and analysis in the development of fisheries management plans in the future(1). In this context, the role of institutions for success in fisheries management is important. The term 'institutions' is often inadequately defined in the fisheries literature – however, it can include both the framework of rules (both formal and informal) which define the inter-relationships between stakeholders and resources, and also the organisations which often define, work within and implement policies relating to these arrangements. Institutions therefore include locally-constituted informal norms and processes, and more formal national legal frameworks and government departments and relevant organisations. Because institutions are paramount to understanding how activities in the fishing sector operate, they are also critical to the success of fisheries management. But, institutions involved in the management of fisheries often need to be developed and strengthened – the function of capacity-building – to enable them to perform effectively and promote successful fisheries management.

WHAT IS CAPACITY-BUILDING?

Capacity-building (or capacity development) has emerged from organisational theory and development management. Other disciplines such as sociology, political science and institutional economics have also influenced thinking in this area. Capacity-building can be understood generally as an endogenous process through which a society changes its rules, institutions and standards of behaviour, increases its level of social capital and enhances its ability to respond, adapt and exert discipline on itself(2).

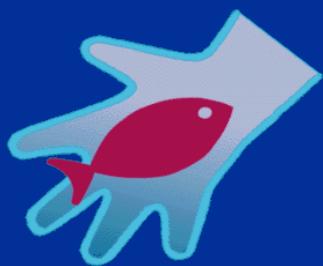
Capacity-building is a broad area which addresses development at different levels of society, it deals with entities of different size and scope, and it deals with the different stages of the development process. In this Policy Brief the emphasis will be on institutional capacity-building.

APPROACHES TO CAPACITY-BUILDING

Two contrasting approaches can be identified as follows:

DFID Fiscal Reform in Fisheries Workshop

In October 2003, SIFAR organised a Workshop and Exchange of Views on Fiscal Reform in Fisheries - to 'promote growth, poverty eradication and sustainable management'. This took place in the context of a wider OECD-DAC Initiative, promoted through the UK Department for International Development (DFID), examining issues related to environmental fiscal reform.



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1. Technocratic rationality and control

Characterised by goal-oriented planning and control theory management (the blue-print approach). Techniques include: the project cycle, management by objectives (MBO) and programme planning budgeting systems (PPBS) from the 1960s, and strategic planning, zero-base budgeting and total performance systems from the 1970s and 1980s, and various forms of Results-Based Management (RBM) in the 1990s. The approach can be summarised as: 'The task can be identified. It can be defined. Goals can be set. And performance can be measured. And then business can perform'. Overall the approach is oriented towards organisational control. It fits best with organisational tasks that are repetitive, production-oriented and focused on direct service delivery.

2. Experimental or learning-based

It is judged that in many development situations, systems are often 'chaotic' and that participants (stakeholders, including primary stakeholders, managers and development planners) have a limited understanding of their operation and the role of institutions. Political, psychological, cultural and social influences on participant behaviour overwhelm the effects of linear planning. Programmes rely less on pre-implementation planning and must give greater emphasis to experimentation, scaling-up from pilot programmes, organisational flexibility, learning, the importance of process and a much more distributed sense of participation and ownership.

Much of the debate about the inter-relationships between the role of institutions and capacity-building (or capacity development) revolves around the tension between these two approaches and the most effective ways of combining them to induce better policy performance in reality.

CAPACITY-BUILDING IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT - SOME KEY FACTORS

The design of a capacity-building strategy to promote success in fisheries management in any particular situation will have to take account of a range of issues, including:

(a) New policy frameworks and fisheries management systems

Fisheries policy frameworks in many countries are still dominated by productionist objectives and technical mechanisms. In order to increase the possibilities for success in fisheries management into a range of areas (economic, social, economic etc.), policy frameworks will have to be broadened. This will require underpinning by appropriate institutional development at all levels of fisheries governance to handle policy implementation and the development of appropriate multi-dimensional fisheries management systems (involving a full range of capacities and skills)⁽³⁾.

(b) New entry-points

Given the poor performance of top-down, centralised fisheries management systems over the past 50 years, and the emergence of new approaches such as co-management, capacity building will need to be targeted at selective interventions to support initiatives in these new areas⁽⁴⁾.

(c) More emphasis on needs

Fisheries development and support has been (and continues to be in many situations) driven by the availability of particular forms of assistance (usually technical). In recent years, there have been greater moves to increase communication, accessibility and transparency between government and the fisheries sector stakeholders. However, there is still a considerable amount of work to be undertaken to improve the relationship and to ensure that needs of the fisheries sector and its stakeholders are adequately reflected in fisheries policy and appropriate capacity-building⁽⁵⁾.

(d) The importance of stakeholder commitment, ownership and partnership

Although there are increasing attempts to deal with commitment and ownership issues in the development of new programmes of assistance for fisheries, there are comparatively few examples of this being achieved successfully. The problem of reconciling the needs, desires and activities of different stakeholders within fisheries can be very challenging. The possibility of building institutional capacity for consensus-building, negotiation and conflict resolution will become increasingly

important in many fisheries in the future⁽⁶⁾.

(e) Time frames and institutional change

Institutional analysis in fisheries is beginning to focus on the roles of different organisational forms over time, but knowledge and understanding in this area is limited. There have been very few studies or analyses of institutional changes over long time periods. It is also known that attempting to promote institutional change through capacity-building can be difficult and risky and time-consuming. Careful analysis is needed to ensure that the existing institutions are no longer useful – in some situations they may provide a basis to build upon⁽⁷⁾.

(f) Capacity development as a political struggle

The politics and political-economy of fisheries is very poorly understood. This can help to explain the poor performance of fisheries assistance programmes in many parts of the world. The future design of capacity-building for fisheries will require a much more in-depth understanding of the political context and the development of strategies to deal with the issues involved⁽⁸⁾.

(g) Institutions and Results-Based Management (RBM)

In some situations, public institutions are sustained despite a record of poor performance, lack of legitimacy or relevance to the management tasks required. Without the existence of a mechanism which relates institutional sustainability to management performance, these institutions will continue to fail to serve important needs or demands from stakeholders, and will form a sink for resources. With sufficient political will, capacity-building to establish RBM systems (replacing redundant systems) will be an important step forward⁽⁹⁾.

THE PROCESS OF CAPACITY-BUILDING

Overall, it is possible to identify at least four broad principles which should be used to guide the development of a process for capacity-building. They can be applied to achieving success in fisheries management and in other natural resource sectors in both developed and developing countries.

1. Prioritisation of capacity-building - should not be seen as an isolated action of technical intervention based on a prescription for development actions; instead, assistance should be a key part of a well-defined process of capacity development (CD);

“Capacity development is the process by which individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to: 1) perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives; and 2) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner” (UNDP, 1997).

2. The design of a process of capacity-building (or capacity development) - will need to take cognisance of:

- the advantages of adopting a broad-based approach to capacity-building including the possibilities for institutional change;
- the possibilities of establishing broad goals (within a policy context) and assessing the factors which are likely to affect outcomes (how can they be offset or facilitated);
- the importance of recognising uncertainties and dealing with complexity;
- the crucial importance of commitment and ownership (by stakeholders);
- the importance of long-term planning and commitment (especially financial resources).

3. The operationalisation of a capacity-building process - should be founded on a Results-Based Management (RBM) approach, whereby:

- the design of RBM takes account of specific advantages/disadvantages of using such an approach in a particular location; (these are well-documented);

- the management of the RBM is founded on careful preliminary assessment of institutions and capacity, there is careful use of information, and there is a strong local commitment;
- the management for results/outcome takes account of uncertainty, and tends to aim for small, incremental goals (as a coping strategy);
- incentives should be used to support RBM and organisational change;
- the capacity and ability to learn and adapt is essential;
- performance (results) should be based on a well-defined system of indicators (which should be tailored to the needs of stakeholders).

4. The relationship between the assistance providers (e.g. government) and recipients (e.g. fisheries sector) will also need to be reviewed regularly, in the light of factors such as:

- the possibility of a changing role as organisational changes occur;
- the need to build capacity for organisational learning;
- balancing accountability and performance.

The four principles outlined above are generic and derived from the international literature. In the future, they could provide a useful framework to undertake further empirical work in fisheries to provide a greater understanding of the links between success in fisheries management and institutional capacity-building.

CONCLUSION

Institutional capacity-building in fisheries to cope with change and the new challenges which it brings should be an essential part of any fisheries management system. In the future, for example, success in fisheries management will require management organisations to possess a full range of analytical skills to ensure that all policy dimensions (biological, economic, social etc.) are dealt with appropriately. At the present time, there is much which can be learned from the success of certain fisheries and incorporated into the design of institutional capacity-building strategies for other fisheries, building upon general principles of capacity development established in the literature.

Key literature

FAO (2002). *The state of World fisheries and aquaculture*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (2003) *Building awareness and capacity: An action plan for continued sustainable development. 2001-2003*.

Handy, C. (1999) *Understanding Organisations*. London: Penguin.

UNDP (1997) Capacity Development. Technical Advisory Paper II. In: *Capacity development resource book*. Management and Governance Division. UNDP.

(1) For an overview of conceptualisations of fisheries and fisheries management, see Policy Brief 12: [Key concepts I: Fisheries management systems and governance](#), in this series.

(2) See: [Capacity.org: A gateway on capacity development](#).

(3) See: Policy Brief 10: [Appropriate policy frameworks: The case of the Northern Prawn Fishery, Australia](#), in this series. Where the development of an effective policy framework has contributed to success in fisheries management in Australia; this could not have been achieved without appropriate broad-based institutional

development and capacity-building.

(4) See: Policy Brief 8: [Cooperation in fisheries management: The case of Senegal](#), in this series, which describes the cooperation which emerged in Senegal between local fisheries stakeholders and government; and reveals some of the positive outcomes which this type of relationship might yield if appropriate capacity-building enhances constructive engagement between different parties.

(5) See: Policy Brief 6: [Holistic approaches to fisheries management planning and stakeholder participation: The case of fisheries in the Shetland Isles](#), in this series, which describes how stakeholder organisation in the Shetland Islands has been crucial to ensuring that the management systems which have evolved take account of local needs and conditions; such a level of organisation amongst fishers requires certain capacities (organisational development) which can be established through appropriate development programmes.

(6) See: Policy Brief 7: [Dealing with complexity and change in fisheries management: The case of small-scale fisheries in Andhra Pradesh, India](#), in this series, which describes the existence of traditional institutions in India which perform many important fisheries management functions, and may provide a basis for further capacity-building (although this would have to be evaluated).

(7) See: Policy Brief 9: [Resource rent as a central concept in fisheries management: The case of Namibia](#), in this series, which shows that although institutional change can be very rapid given the political will to pursue certain policies as in the case of Namibia's fisheries, this is in contrast to many parts of the world where capacity-building and institutional change are relatively slow.

(8) See: Policy Brief 5: [Building institutional capacity: The case of Mauritania](#), in this series, which reveals that the political-economy of fisheries has both national and international dimensions in many countries (in this case Mauritania), which need to be incorporated into capacity-building approaches.

(9) See: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (2003) for an example of a design of an RBM approach to fisheries management.

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