Engaging stakeholders in generating advice – the case of fishers

Terrence Phillips
CRFM

Expert Consultation on Operationalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission

Building a science-policy interface for ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean

Association of Caribbean States - Caribbean Sea Commission

University of the West Indies

Barbados, July 7-9, 2010
Engaging fishers in generating advice: the case of fishers

Outline

- Importance of the fisheries sector in CARICOM/CARIFORUM region
- Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)
- Development of the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO)
- CNFO policy influencing
- Lessons learned
Fisheries sector - in the CARICOM/CARIFORUM region

- Employs over 182,000 persons, directly or indirectly
  - mainly from small scale fisheries in rural communities
  - lack or limited alternative income earning opportunities
- Produced approximately 195,000 MT with an estimated value of over US$500 million (2000).
- Earns over US$150 million per year from export.
- Major source of nutrition, especially in rural areas.
Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)


Mission: to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region’s fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region.

- Programme areas include:
  - Strengthening of fishers’ organizations and improved community participation
  - Development and promotion of risk reduction programmes for fishers

- Members:
  Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts / Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands.
Needs assessment of Caribbean fisherfolk organisations (FFOs)

Recommendation:
Formation of a regional network of NFOs, recognising the need for strengthening fisherfolk organisations’ capacities through a strategy for addressing the issues revealed

Issues revealed by the needs assessment:
- Lack of critical mass of NFOs for launching the network
- Fisherfolk organisations’ weak management skills
- Insufficient access to relevant information by fisherfolk
- Fisherfolk’s limited communication and advocacy skills
Objective: to contribute to improved income earnings, higher standards of living of fisherfolk and the sustainable management of fisheries resources in the Caribbean.

Purpose: to develop institutional capacities of fisherfolk organizations at the regional, national and community levels.

Approach included:
- Identifying potential for a regional network among FFOs
- Establishing, formalizing national fisherfolk organisations (NFOs) as the backbone of the regional network
- Training fisherfolk leaders in network management, communication
Multilevel strengthening and networking

Regional

- CRFM Secretariat and others
- Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations
- CRFM Fisheries Forum and Ministerial Council

National

- National Fisherfolk Organisations

Local

- Primary Fisherfolk Organisations

Timeline
Creation of a regional network of fisher folk organisations (cont’d)

2006 to 2009 achieved:

- National consultations to launch NFOs
- NFOs or steering committees formed or strengthened
- September 2007, Grenada: Regional Fishers Stakeholder Workshop; Establishment of the CNFO-Coordinating Unit
- October 2008, St. Lucia: Training Workshop on Management, Communication and Advocacy for Fisher Folk Organizations
- Publication of the Fisher Folk Net newsletter
- Publication of 2008 Fisheries Stakeholders Directory (updated 2009)
CNFO-CU policy influencing

CNFO-CU and partners convened two workshops in January and April 2009 on regional fisherfolk organisation policy influence and planning:

- Embarked on the preparation of a strategy and work plan

- Presentation to the January 2009 CRFM’s Ministerial Council Meeting [Issues: trade in fish and fish products; CFP; IUU fishing]

- Participation in the April 2009 CRFM Special Forum to develop a common fisheries policy for the CARICOM Member States

Vision: Primary, national and regional fisherfolk organizations with knowledgeable members collaborating to sustain fishing industries that are mainly owned and governed by fisherfolk who enjoy a good quality of life achieved through the ecosystem based management of fisheries resources.

Mission: To improve the quality of life for fisherfolk and develop a sustainable and profitable industry through networking, representation and capacity building.

The CNFO-CU is now participating as an observer at the Caribbean Fisheries Forum as the regional fisherfolk representative.
Lessons learned
Among the lessons learned:

• effective participatory natural resource management requires an organisational culture that genuinely embraces shared policy and decision-making and collaborative management; appropriate institutional and organisational structures; material resources; adaptive strategies and linkages

• a significant investment in capacity building is needed over a period of several years in order to facilitate the development of a sustainable organisation or network

• partnerships between technical agencies, applied research institutes and resource users can contribute to the enhanced capacity and understanding of all parties and facilitates the development of consensual positions

• effective policy influence requires the use of multiple communication products and channels.