



Policy Perspectives

Perspectives on resource management and environmental policy from the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados.

Getting more fisherfolk into better fisheries governance

The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) has initiated this outreach publication, *Policy Perspectives*, primarily in order to share some of the lessons from recent projects. Our interdisciplinary applied research projects emphasise learning-by-doing through the collaboration of researchers, beneficiaries and other parties. The information in these policy briefs may be used by policy-makers and their advisers to strengthen the linkages between research and policy in the Caribbean. This connection is often weak in natural resource management and governance.

It is important to pay attention to policy and governance because these processes produce the big decisions that drive everyday operations, management and administration in the industry. You will often hear someone remark “that is policy and we have to follow it”. What about your views on policy?

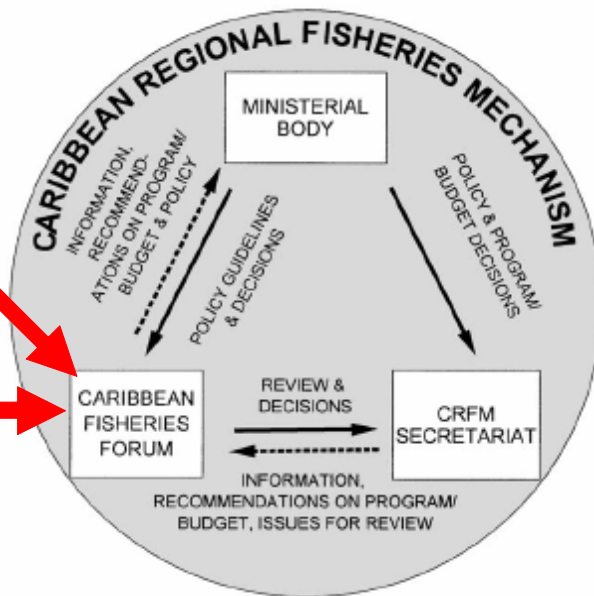
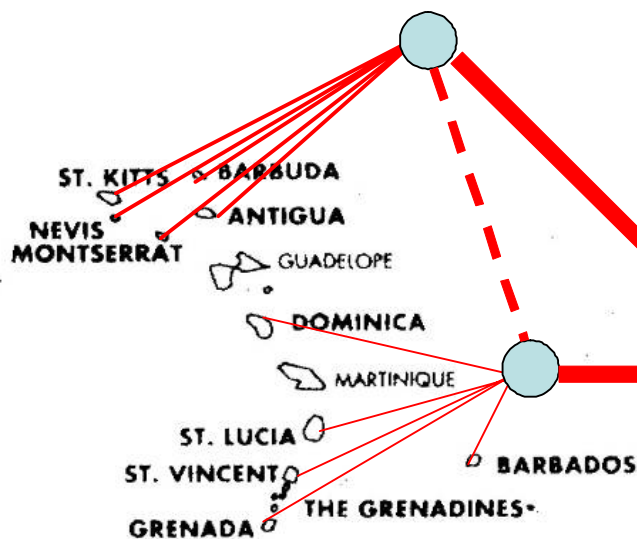
Are fisherfolk organisation networks the way forward on a regional (CRFM) level?

While some powerful individual fisherfolk and a few small fisherfolk organisations (FFOs) may be able to influence national level policy, some have suggested that a fisherfolk network will be needed to influence regional policy and to play a meaningful role in governance at the regional level.

Why should fisherfolk be interested in fisheries policy and governance?

Fishing is a very dangerous occupation. It is one of the most dangerous and physically demanding in the world. Added to that the returns from fishing are uncertain in terms of catches and income from sale ... even in the postharvest sector there

A regional FFO network can be a series of national fisherfolk organisations (NFOs) or a mixture of both national and local groups linked to each other across the Caribbean in the same way that large corporations or the University of the West Indies link various departments my means of electronic



is a fair amount of risk. If making the fishing industry your livelihood is so difficult, why add the complication of getting involved in policy and governance?

The main reason is that policy and governance are all about who makes the high -level fisheries decisions, how these decisions are made, who has a say and who benefits from them. We use terms like stakeholder, participation, policy domain and others to describe these processes.

communication and occasional face-to-face meetings. All over the world networks are being formed to achieve results.

The diagram shows networked fisherfolk sub-groups in the northern and southern parts of the eastern Caribbean having influence on decision-making in the Caribbean Fisheries Forum of our own Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM). The FFOs in the islands are linked so as to plan and communicate to strengthen the voice of fisherfolk in policy.

Why would policy makers and advisers want fisherfolk to be involved in fisheries policy and governance?

These days you hear a lot about 'good governance' and 'civil society'. Policy advisers (such as Chief Fisheries Officers, Registrars of Cooperatives and other department heads) and policy makers (Ministers and Members of Parliament) are often keen to get ordinary people involved in governance in order to demonstrate that they are genuinely practising good governance. The latter has principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, effectiveness, efficiency and others. The point is that governance has become much more inclusive in many places. Fisherfolk voices need to be heard.



Some of the ways in which fisherfolk can participate includes strategic planning that creates consensus on key and critical medium to long term goals and objectives. Strategies drive the operational decisions that are made in management. Are you prepared to be involved in strategic planning for a FFO or for a fishery or for the entire fishing industry? If you are, then you need to have the knowledge needed to participate.



Most people in a fishing industry already have the kind of knowledge need to plan strategically. However, once plans are made they have to be implemented. This is where a lot more skills come into play. Sometimes FFO capacity has to

be built before plans can be implemented. Policy advisers and makers know this, and are often willing to assist, but the onus is on the fisherfolk to help themselves for their role in policy.

Building the capacity of fisherfolk and organisations for better fisheries policy and governance

Helping yourself is sometimes not easy. FFO networks will help in that through links and ties to other similar groups with different skills you can pursue the same objectives while transferring and sharing knowledge and skills. If one FFO knows a lot about planning or financial management it can help another FFO that share knowledge on co-management and negotiation. Both FFOs come out winners and are likely to find many other areas in which to collaborate. Below are some of the areas in which FFOs may need to build capacity.

- Conflict management
- Negotiation
- Co-management
- Communication
- Leadership
- NGO board training
- Strategic planning
- Socio-economic monitoring (SocMon)
- Livelihood analysis
- Stakeholder analysis
- Facilitation
- Project management
- Marine science

Do not underestimate the power of group effort. Network!



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