12 Lessons learned for out-scaling and up-scaling from *Fisheries and governance*

Key points

- Fisheries governance has shifted from maximising production to sustaining fish stocks. Much of this stems from research on fish biology and the effects of fishing on fish stocks.
- Policies have shifted from command-and-control to devolution of power. Access rights are being addressed.
- Governance of fisheries needs to be nested and integrated at international, national and local scales. For this to happen, governments need to be convinced that fisheries are important for economic growth.
- The skills and resource base in fisheries management are low. Capacity building addresses the tip of the iceberg but education systems need to change to turn out people with appropriate skills and knowledge.

Lessons learned

Control of fisheries is, overall, ineffective. One quarter of global fish stocks are over-fished, another half are fully fished. However, tools are available to improve the management of fisheries [Box 12.1].

Box 12.1

Tools to improve control of fisheries
Countries can benefit from selling licenses to fish in Exclusive Economic Zones and exporting fish. But they only benefit if licensing is well managed. Research has developed tools that help evaluate options.

Seychelles policy and management system for controlling foreign fishing vessels:
- Seychelles Fishing Authority staff and other key stakeholders learned to control foreign fishing vessels in the Seychelles Exclusive Economic Zone
- crews of illegal boats arrested and convicted
- laws revised
- annual revenues quadrupled by setting appropriate fees, legal penalties and budgets for surveillance.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing:
Globally, governments lose US$2.4 billion annually because of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Almost always, this is because of poor control—no monitoring systems, weak law enforcement, corruption.

Unless governments can be convinced to adopt nested governance structures for international, national and local fisheries, research on sustaining fisheries and maintaining or raising the contributions they make to economic growth, food security and livelihoods is unlikely to be put to widespread use. This framework needs to be in place for power to be successfully devolved.

Policies are weak because they are based on poor data.
Policy makers have to steer a path through conflicting demands on fisheries. The biological, social and economic data and analyses they are offered are often a poor basis for making decisions. This means that policy objectives for fisheries are usually not clear and that the framework for developing and managing individual fisheries is weak.

Most people with responsibilities in managing fisheries just do not have what they need to do the job. Unless fisheries authorities are properly resourced and suitably staffed, the existing tools and methods for understanding and managing fisheries will not be used. Education systems seldom prepare graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to manage fisheries and in-service training addresses but the tip of the iceberg.

This synopsis of lessons learned for up-scaling and out-scaling research into use is based on:
MRAG/DFID (2006) Fisheries and Governance. FMSP Policy Brief 5. London: MRAG Ltd.
see
http://www.fmsp.org.uk/Documents/keylessons/FMSPBrief5_Governance.pdf