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**Institutional Arrangements for Coastal
Management in the Caribbean.**

**Experiment 2: Testing the Uptake of Co-management Tools and
Messages in Training Natural Resource Users and Managers**

**BARBADOS CASE STUDY:
THE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

A SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNT

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About this document

This summary of lessons learnt was developed from the Barbados case study: the Fisheries Advisory Committee, Caribbean Coastal Co-management Guidelines Project, Caribbean Conservation Association as an output of Experiment 2: *Testing co-management tools and messages for Training Natural Resource Users and Managers*, which forms part of the DFID funded research project “**Pro-poor Policies and Institutional Arrangements for Coastal Management in the Caribbean**”. The goal of the project was to ensure that integrated coastal management Research in the Caribbean is promoted and benefits those who depend on the resources of coastal areas, especially where there is poverty. The purpose was to test the uptake of products of a previous DFID funded project R8134: Caribbean Coastal co-management guidelines, focussing on establishing and sustaining successful co-management of coastal resources in the Caribbean. This summary of lessons learnt is aimed at the users and managers of coastal resources in the Caribbean and will be most useful for teaching students with an undergraduate degree or training others with some prior experience in coastal resource management.

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Executive summary

A feature of harmonised fisheries legislation of CARICOM Member States in the eastern Caribbean is that Fisheries Advisory Committees (FAC) be established to advise the minister responsible for fisheries on fisheries management, conservation and development. The FAC is a formal, national co-management arrangement via a multi-stakeholder body. Barbados' FAC has existed since 1995. This case study examines the institutional relationships of the FAC in Barbados and examines what may be done to enhance its co-management capacity. The Conditions for FAC success, and factors that are more likely to result in failure, are likely to be similar in some of these islands. This has regional relevance since, despite the legislation; few Member States have successfully established or sustained FACs

The nine-member FAC in Barbados is a technical committee of fairly low status, made mandatory under the Fisheries Act and affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The committee has had a difficult history in terms of gaining recognition and receiving feedback from various ministers responsible for fisheries. However, it has achieved reasonable success due to the support from the Fisheries Division in following up on advice tendered. The FAC has become more representative of the fishing industry through amendments to the Fisheries Act and comprises a majority of members from the fishing industry. However, most industry members are appointed in a personal capacity and linkages to fishery workers and investors are tenuous.

In planning for its new term of office the Fisheries Advisory Committee stressed the need for its own capacity building and empowerment through information acquisition, communication, the strengthening of shared interests and appreciation of the value of the fishing industry. The FAC wishes to move from being a consultative body to ultimately becoming a collaborative institution through a change in the legal mandate upon the minister's instruction. The Barbados FAC is a case of consultative co-management in the implementation stage.

Several of the factors for success are already satisfied, but communication and capacity building, especially for collective action, stand out as areas requiring priority attention.

Lessons learnt

In this document we present the conclusions or lessons learnt about co-management based on the Barbados FAC case study. The lessons learnt are presented under headings which represent the key characteristics of successful co-management institutional arrangements. Emphasis is placed on understanding the conditions and factors for successful co-management as perceived by the stakeholders at the case study research sites. The choice of conditions is also supported by empirical evidence from initiatives at more advanced phases of development in other regions of the world. Effort was also directed towards promoting the uptake of concepts and practices that may lead to co-management success. The information collected for use in this case study came mainly from focus group and workshop methods with former and present members of the Fisheries Advisory Committee. A Participatory strategic planning was undertaken with the Committee. These methods were supplemented by document analysis.

Type of co-management

The research framework summarises the main types of co-management as consultative, collaborative and delegated. The Fisheries Advisory Committee by legal mandate is clearly consultative. However, the research revealed that the members of the Committee that includes the fisheries authority, fishing industry and coastal management unit are in favour of the body becoming a vehicle for collaborative management in due course. The main criterion for the transition is that it is able to prove itself as an effective and sustainable institution for consultation. There is no suggestion that delegated co-management be institutionalised through the FAC.

Phase of co-management

The Fisheries Advisory Committee is at the stage of co-management implementation. The body was legally established in 1993 and has functioned since 1995. Government, resource users and other stakeholders are trying out the arrangement and making adjustments to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Given the several deficiencies with its present operation it is likely to remain in implementation for some years to come before it matures into post-implementation.

Boundaries

The sphere of interest of the Fisheries Advisory Committee is very wide, ranging from local to international matters as illustrated by its agenda over the years. There are few fisheries issues that the legal mandate cannot be stretched to cover, although it focuses mainly on the waters of Barbados. These boundaries are quite adequate for national co-management.

Membership and stakeholders

The membership of the Committee is legally defined and appropriate. The amendment of the Fisheries Act in 2000 demonstrates flexibility to accommodate additional major stakeholders. The provision to invite other stakeholders to participate in meetings on a regular basis is another device that facilitates efficiency and equity. There is probably no need for change, although the use of sub-committees for harvest, post harvest and research as discussed and agreed to by the FAC at one point, but never implemented, should result in improved performance.

Resource use problem

Resource use problems are very clearly identified in the fisheries management plans. Since these plans were formulated through participatory processes one can conclude that problem

recognition is shared among stakeholders. However there is little evidence that the plans are referred to, even within the FAC, for decision-making on a regular basis concerning resource use. Conventional fisheries issues of resource exploitation and stock status are not prominent on the FAC agenda. Many of the problems addressed by the FAC are of a more operational nature (fish markets, tax concessions, etc.) that the plans do not adequately cover. If the Fisheries Advisory Committee was to deal mainly with fisheries management instead of operations it is likely that provisions in the current plan would be adequate for co-management.

Management objectives

Management objectives are clearly stated in the fisheries management plans, but known only by a handful of people in the fisheries authority because the plans have not been promoted. The Fisheries Division and BARNUFO have jointly developed the current plans, with appraisal and endorsement by the FAC. There is no evidence that either the fisheries authority or BARNUFO is systematically working towards achieving the stated objectives for any fishery. Where progress can be seen, such as in the large pelagic, turtle and sea urchin fisheries, the initiatives have tended to be disjointed and opportunistic. This perhaps reflects that reality that the fisheries authority makes significant progress towards meeting these objectives only when they coincide with the interests of external agencies or other interested parties. For the FAC to improve in the area of meeting management objectives, they need to be better known by all of the stakeholders.

Scale of management

The scales of management in the fisheries plans are appropriate to the resources. In several cases the fisheries are shared regionally or internationally, and neither the FAC nor the state has much impact on these resources. The institutional arrangements for their management are absent or weak except for those in which external interests dominate such as in ICCAT and UN bodies. The Fisheries Advisory Committee is limited, for practical purposes, to national co-management. Its composition is adequate for this scale.

Management adaptation

The FAC has been instrumental in making significant changes to the way in which the fisheries authority approaches management. The body has been effective in drafting or reviewing legal instruments for management that have kept pace with the need for change. Yet this has been insufficient for demonstrating flexibility in management because few of the instruments have come into force for administrative and policy reasons. The outcome is that management is not adaptive, but is very slow to respond. Having concluded that fisheries co-management in Barbados is about the total fishery and not just the resource or harvest sector, adaptation and improvement in response time are urgently needed.

Cooperation

Cooperation in coastal zone management as a whole appears to be situation and subject specific. There is perhaps no less cooperation among fisheries stakeholders than among those involved in other coastal uses, but apart from certain watersport operators, most user groups appear to be more effectively organised than fisherfolk. The fisheries authority and fisherfolk are willing to cooperate, as illustrated by the number of joint projects between BARNUFO and the Fisheries Division. Cooperation will most likely continue to improve through opportunities for sustained positive interaction. Cooperation among the FAC members as individuals is good.

Leadership

The Fisheries Advisory Committee chairman was from government only in the first term. A private sector or NGO chairperson should have more freedom to lead than a public officer. The major weakness is that, since the FAC is a low status technical body, there is no political link between its leadership and the policy-makers. This results in the FAC having little power regardless of how proficient its leader is. Leadership is lacking in the fisherfolk organisations for a number of reasons including skills and the time required to lead while at the same time pursuing a fishing livelihood. Leaders also complain of the high levels of free-ridership prevalent in the industry and do not consider the resulting distribution of work to be equitable. Evidence of good leadership in the government agencies may be suppressed by a limited capacity to perform numerous competing tasks. The low status and power of the fisheries authority within the public service structure and Ministry of Agriculture may also mask the quality of leadership since good or bad leaders appear equally ineffectual.

Collective action

The FAC has so far taken decisions by consensus rather than the voting procedure provided for in its legal rules. Meeting minutes reflect few substantive disagreements among members on most issues. However, while its decisions may be collective, because it is only advisory these do not translate into action taken by the FAC itself. Outside of the FAC, the weaknesses of the fisherfolk organisations suggests that much will have to be done to promote sustained collective action by them if co-management is to be institutionalised.

Conflict management

Barbadian society is renowned for being generally free of aggressive conflicts, although recent commentaries on increasing crime, and public calls for conflict resolution, suggest that this may be changing. Within the Fisheries Advisory Committee there is no evidence of conflict among members. There are no formal mechanisms for conflict management in the fishing industry and it is unlikely that the FAC would be turned to by any stakeholder should conflicts arise. The FAC has shown sensitivity to the need for conflict management, as illustrated by encouragement for harvest and postharvest parties to negotiate mutually agreeable tariff rates for fish imports as a result of trade liberalisation.

Effective communication

Communication has been effective within the FAC, and generally between it and the Fisheries Division. It has not been very effective with either the fishing industry or the Ministry. In the latter case the FAC has responded to top-down directives from the policy level but has consistently reported that upwards communication seldom results in action. In other statutory advisory bodies the law explicitly states that the group can determine what to advise the Minister on and offer the advice even if unsolicited. The FAC members, except public officers, have high expectations that the minister or top ministry officials will play a larger role in setting the agenda for the FAC to ensure that advice is demand-led. This perspective differs from that of government agencies that routinely offer technical advice and see this as the end of their obligation, separating delivery of advice from the use of the advice in decision-making. Communication requires more attention in order for co-management to improve, as shown by the recommended strategic directions of the present FAC members.

Effective coordination

There appears to be willingness to coordinate between the Fisheries Division and BARNUFO as shown in the handling of the fish kill compensation disbursement. The FAC has not had much of a coordinating role since it has no executive powers. In keeping with its mandate it has helped

to encourage and facilitate coordination between the Fisheries Division and the Markets Division. It is the only formal forum that these agencies of the Ministry have for interaction. The several policy directives for the FAC to place emphasis on problems at fish markets suggests recognition of this role, but lack of authority results in outcomes being deficient or lacking.

Trust and respect

The participating stakeholders ranked this variable quite low, but the frequency of events and projects in which partnerships are formed for implementation suggests that there is a fair degree of trust and respect. However, with this variable perceptions are particularly important. If stakeholders perceive that there is little trust and respect then they are likely to behave on the basis of this perception. While the ecological knowledge of fisherfolk is respected by the fisheries authority, there is less trust and respect for them as partners in management given their deficiencies in organisation. This is one of the reasons why delegated co-management is unlikely. Members of the FAC share trust and respect amongst themselves, but do not consider the body respected by the Ministry's policy makers and advisers due to the lack of action on advice tendered, and the absence of feedback.

Organisational capacity

Recognising that its resources and capacity for fisheries management are inadequate, the Fisheries Division has sought institutional review and strengthening for itself and the fisheries operations of the Markets Division, but this has proceeded in a fragmented manner over the past few years. The Ministry of Agriculture is also contemplating institutional changes, but focused on splitting into research and regulatory sections. It is unclear how the Fisheries Division would fit into this future structure. The fisheries authority's capacity is now weakest in scientific research. It lacks human resources for the science required to inform management decision-making on a regular basis. It relies on the fishing industry for assistance in data collection and on a few academic researchers for processing data into information. This causes the Fisheries Division to seek partnerships that exemplify co-management. Organisational capacity is relatively weak amongst the fishing industry stakeholders except the fish processors. The Fisheries Division does not have the capacity to support the structures and operations of fisherfolk organisations. This is a serious constraint that must be overcome. The FAC has excellent capacity to advise, but almost none to act unless members using their own resources undertake tasks voluntarily. The Fisheries Division has acted as secretariat to the FAC in order to improve integration and support, but this relationship has varied over time, and the FAC is quite weak without this support.

Financial resources

The Fisheries Division has a small budget, but there is no evidence that lack of funds seriously hinders fisheries management. The constraint may be that the government's financial system is neither sufficiently quick nor responsive to supply funds when required at short notice or for unplanned purposes. Public sector structure does not allow the Fisheries Division to seek out its own financing. Fisherfolk organisations have minimal financial resources, lack plans for proper capitalisation, and typically do not seek donor financing without external assistance. Their potential, as NGOs, to attract funds has not been realised. These organisations have found it difficult to meet the reporting requirements of funding agencies. Most often they seek in-kind assistance from the local private sector for specific purposes.

External agents

The external agents in this case were funding sources and research institutes. All have been supportive of co-management, but there appears to be no dependency upon them. Interventions

by external agents would be most useful in promoting fishery co-management at the policy level since this is an area in which local stakeholders have relatively influence.

Net benefits

Fisheries and coastal management are still new initiatives and participation in them is recent. It is too early to tell whether benefits will exceed costs in the long run. From the government's perspective there is little cost to operating the FAC at the moment compared to the quality of expertise and advice obtained. If members were hired as consultants, their fees would far exceed the budget allocated to the Fisheries Advisory Committee. However, this is not how government generally measures benefits, and the lack of or delays in response to advice suggests that the outputs of the FAC are not highly valued. Members have made it clear that from their perspective the personal outlay exceeds monetary or intangible rewards. Members are willing to forego earnings from their occupations if the products of the FAC are shown to have value. Their levels of satisfaction are low because low value is placed on the FAC. If this feeling is widespread it may become difficult to attract capable and committed members to the committee in the future. The likely consequence will be a decline in the performance of the committee in terms of co-management. The strategic directions developed by the FAC members also stress the need to rally the industry around a more informed sense of its own worth.

Representation in decision-making

There are significant gaps in representation in the formal decision-making structure of the Fisheries Advisory Committee. Fisherfolk have not sought to extensively use the FAC as a vehicle for representation. BARNUFO is a secondary body represented on the Fisheries Advisory Committee. No primary fisherfolk organisation members are recorded as presenting an issue within this structure for the FAC to consider. BARNUFO therefore presents mainly the informal view of individuals in the industry and those of its executive. The industry members of the FAC are selected on individual merit rather than collective representation, although the Fisheries Division has tried to ensure that members are affiliated with fisherfolk organisations. The largest gap in representation, however, is at the policy level since records show that the FAC has seldom been requested to be part of policy decision-making. Typically the Chief Fisheries Officer is called upon by the Ministry to offer advice. Although problems have not yet arisen, the invisibility of the FAC may result in its outputs being ignored, especially if a Chief Fisheries Officer is inclined to present only his or her own advice rather than include that of the FAC which may differ. The FAC has recommended regular policy level meetings on its agenda.

Enforcement

Enforcement is not an issue that has occupied the attention of the FAC. It does not apply to the body itself, and is known to be one of the weakest aspects of fisheries management in Barbados for several reasons including widespread belief that access to fisheries is the right of citizens and not a privilege to be regulated. The enforcement agencies have low individual and collective marine enforcement capacity. Their priorities usually exclude fisheries contraventions since these are not viewed as serious offences. Of particular note is that enforcement agencies have publicly voiced and demonstrated their interest in controlling the operations of fishing vessels since these are often suspected in illegal non-fishing activities, but they have not expressed similar concern over illegal local or foreign fishing activities.

Property rights

No property rights exist in law or customary practice in the fisheries of Barbados. Given the preceding observations it will be difficult to develop property rights to support co-management.

Sharing decision-making

Coincident with representation, decisions are typically not shared in formal structures since the FAC is ineffective as an institution of policy engagement. Relatively few decisions are made at the level of the fisheries authority alone. There appears to be willingness at the Fisheries Division level to share decisions with the industry. Both of these parties perceive that only by combining forces can they develop the power necessary to influence policy. They need to find a mechanism to get more of their joint advice into the public arena where policy-makers tend to pay attention.

Decentralisation and delegation

There is very little decentralisation and no delegation of responsibility and authority by the state to either resource users or the management agency. Limitations in capacity and the legal framework are barriers to decentralisation and delegation. The fisheries regulations need to make provisions for delegation of authority to fisherfolk organisations in order to promote collaboration. These provisions may then be used as leverage to strengthen the organisations provided that there is willingness and leadership to respond. The FAC has recommended a strategic direction for its empowerment that would transform it, through delegation and decentralisation, from an instrument of consultative to collaborative management. However, if co-management via the FAC remains consultative these requirements will be minimal.

Social and cultural fit

It was felt that there is not yet a very good social and cultural fit for fisheries co-management due to the novelty of civil society participation in governance and the persistence of dependency fostered by patronage politics that followed the colonial period. This outlook is changing as more citizens demand a say in how the country is run via letters to the newspapers, call-in radio programs, town hall meetings and other popular participatory interventions. However, there is still a large gap between the aspirations of the fishing industry for co-management reported in several studies and the actual effort made by the fisherfolk to move in this direction. Co-management initiatives remain largely driven by government and this does not suggest a social and cultural imperative to establish management partnerships at the grassroots level. Persons in the fishing industry who are not on the committee have expressed the view that the FAC is an instrument of government rather than an instrument for their own empowerment and development.

Priority action

Property rights, perceptions of benefits, development of trust and delegation of responsibility and authority were said by workshop participants to be key areas in which action was urgently needed. The FAC needs to implement its strategic directions in order to improve its image, build capacity, foster collective action and cohesiveness within the industry, and empower itself. Key in this process is building stronger functional linkages with the policy-maker it is intended to serve. Given the evidence of poor people among those in the fishing industry, it would be appropriate for the Fisheries Advisory Committee to forge closer links with the Poverty Alleviation Bureau to ensure that the latter has strategies and actions that target fisherfolk in need.

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