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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**

**GRENADA CASE STUDY:  
LEGALISATION OF BEACH SEINE  
TRADITIONAL RULES AT GOUYAVE**

**SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNT**

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## About this document

This summary of lessons learnt was developed from the Grenada case study: legalisation of beach seine traditional rules at Gouyave., 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

Traditional fishery rules are poorly documented in the eastern Caribbean. An outstanding exception is the work of James Finlay, the recently retired head of the fisheries authority in Grenada. His thoroughly documented research and industry consultations on the beach seine rules in Grenada have led to them being recommended for legalisation. This case researched how fisheries stakeholders and the government may approach this in the case of Gouyave, a west coast town known as the fishing capital of Grenada, where beach seining for coastal pelagics and small-scale longlining for tunas are very interactive fisheries. A variety of conflicts have arisen out of these interactions.

Although the recommendation to reduce conflict through legislation has been made, and seems to be agreed with by the fishing industry based on previous consultations, it is not clear if or how the process will proceed. A critical factor is the extent to which legislation will allow local level interpretation and development of the rules to continue. Caribbean fisheries legislation is not known for its flexibility and scope for adaptation. This community-based control is likely to be feasible only if the fishery stakeholders in Gouyave desire this level of power and responsibility.

Gouyave, the fishing capital of Grenada, would seem to be an excellent candidate for a location in which fisheries management could be led by the community. Yet, although it has a rich history of fishing organisation formation, there has not been much success in sustaining these groups despite external assistance. The most successful organisations in Gouyave rely on a small cadre of professionals and businesspeople. Within the fishing community there is less motivation for the seine fishers to become organised than there is for the longliners. The latter could benefit from collectively bargaining with fish buyers and the government. The seiners' primary collective interest would be in several arenas of conflict management.

The findings concerning the interaction between nets and boats in the bay, and the legalisation of the traditional rules, are consistent in showing that the fishers have no interest in, or capacity for, taking on the responsibility of managing the fishery without considerable support and direction from government. The fishers have concluded that there is no respect for rules formulated through community structures and processes. This lack of respect and the ineffectiveness of social sanctions is said to be strongest among the younger generation of fishers. This young generation is also prominent in the operations of the longline fishery with which the fortunes of the beach seine fishery are intertwined.

The lack of confidence in the community to solve its problems has led to dependence on government to provide solutions. However, the fisheries authority does not have the capacity to serve as a conflict manager. Consequently, the most probable option is to design a legal structure and process that is responsive to the particular needs of the fishery and less cumbersome than the normal judicial process. The fishers have undertaken exercises in preparation for this and are intent on retaining a level of interest and control that is consistent with co-management. The major remaining challenge is to convince the top political decision-makers that this approach to legalisation is likely to be successful.

## **Lessons Learnt**

In this document we present the conclusions or lessons learnt for co-management based on the Grenada case study: legalisation of beach seine traditional rules at Gouyave. 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 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

### **Type of co-management**

The research framework summarises the main types of co-management as consultative, collaborative and delegated. The initiative to legalise the traditional rules of the Grenada beach seine fishery and incorporate them in to the fisheries management process is just a proposal. This case study continued the research of the former Chief Fisheries Officer who was keen to promote this consultative management that has the potential of becoming collaborative or delegated. Delegated co-management seemed feasible at the start of the study since use of the rules has been cited as an example of territorial property rights in fisheries and community-based management. Yet, the fishers in Gouyave are not in favour of strengthening community institutions and acquiring power. This may not reflect attitudes across the island, but the probability is high. Similarly there is little interest in Gouyave in collaborative management. The inability to sustain effective fisherfolk organisations partly explains the preference for wanting government to exercise most of the management responsibility, but guided by select fishers.

### **Phase of co-management**

This case illustrates the very first stages of pre-implementation in which the co-management arrangements, the stakeholders, and their patterns of interaction are flexible and dynamic. It is unlikely that this case will advance beyond this phase in the near future, and it is possible that it will remain largely unmanaged, or become command and control, unless there is more interest in establishing co-management than was demonstrated during the case study period.

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of individual haul sites, and clusters of them, are well defined and documented. They are operational aspects of the beach seine territorial use system. These boundaries have been used for the traditional rules and are adequate for introducing co-management.

### **Membership and stakeholders**

The beach seine fishers around Gouyave are fairly well defined in terms of net captains and regular sailormen. However, there is a very dynamic pool of helpers and vendors that make defining overall participation in the fishery difficult. At times, almost the entire town can become engaged in some aspect of the fishery, its support or market. There are no formal or informal barriers to fishery entry or exit. Stakeholders in this case include the Fisheries Division, net owners and individual fishers (both seine and longline). The St. John's Fishermen's Association, Gouyave Improvement Committee, Cooperatives Division and an emergent fishing cooperative are interested parties. The former should be a stakeholder, but its dormancy precludes this in any meaningful way.

### **Resource use problem**

For the beach seine fishery, resource use has not been identified as a problem apart from the need to manage conflicts. The number of nets used in the Gouyave cluster decreased following the impact of hurricane Lenny. Recent low catches are of concern for livelihoods, but not the health of the resource. Fluctuations in abundance and availability are considered normal. Of greater concern may be the scarcity of bait available for supplying the longline fishery. This fishery is highly dependent on seining, and catch and effort in this fishery are increasing. However, bait shortage is not yet a major concern, although it could be on a local scale if the number of active nets continues to decrease. The absence of a specific resource problem weakens the motivation for establishing co-management.

### **Management objectives**

There is a recent draft fisheries management plan, but only the author, a former Chief Fisheries Officer, is particularly familiar with its contents or is able to champion its approval by the policy-makers. The operational management objectives that currently apply to the beach seine and longline fisheries are not very clear. Formal approval of the draft plan is not advancing at the policy level. Management objectives need to become clear and common for stakeholders to determine the most appropriate approach to management. This clarity is needed particularly at the policy level.

### **Scale of management**

The beach seine fishery can be managed at the community level although small coastal pelagic fish move along the coast, crossing community boundaries. Gouyave was just the location of enquiry in this case. Ultimately there should be national management. Legalised traditional rules would apply nationally, perhaps with provision for some local exceptions. There could be nested scales of co-management in this fishery.

### **Management adaptation**

There is little active management of the beach seine fishery. Management of the longline tuna fishery will be dictated mainly by external events and international or regional management measures. The beach seine traditional rules have been adapted in several locations to fit the fishing practices. Flexibility to evolve must be built into the process of legalisation. Regarding the fisheries regulations, as a result of interventions by the Fisheries Division there have been several amendments since their original passage. This suggests willingness to make regulatory changes, but more responsive mechanisms for management adaptation will be required for co-management based on traditional rules to be efficient.

### **Cooperation**

The Fisheries Division assessed cooperation as satisfactory based on the willingness of fisherfolk to participate in the events it organises. Participation in the meetings to document the traditional rules, coastal issues and their solutions was good. However, the main issue raised for this fishery was the impact of low cooperation among fishers such as rule-breaking, bait being withheld from longliners and the failure of fisher organisations in Gouyave. More cooperation is needed between the Fisheries Division and Cooperatives Division, but no mechanism for this is available. Given the recent increased interest in promoting fishing cooperatives, and the apparent demand from fishers for this type of organisation, this deficiency could become a major obstacle to the success of co-management.

## **Leadership**

Gouyave has produced several leaders of local and national fishing groups who appear to be individually capable, but still unable to maintain viability of the organisations. Ordinary members of the groups, and even those on the executives, are reluctant to challenge the leaders and replace them or the structures that they head. Several business people, and others who have leadership skills, have investments in the fishing industry based at Gouyave and may be called upon for assistance. The same people are key members of several Gouyave organisations. This may cause problems, including conflict of interest, but it may also facilitate very productive networking. Local leadership will be important for co-management success in this fishery.

## **Collective action**

The dormant fishing association, improvement committee and emergent fishing cooperative are the most relevant vehicles of collective action in this case. There is no body that currently represents the beach seine fishery, although the association had several members and it is possible that the new cooperative could become relevant. Compared to the longline fishery, except for conflict management, there are presently fewer income-related reasons for the seiners to act collectively except in fishing operations. The challenge would be for seiners to sustain collective action in the co-management context where they face fewer crises to motivate such action than the longliners.

## **Conflict management**

Conflict management is the root of the reason for proposing co-management of this fishery. If the traditional rules are broken and are lost from customary practice, then conflicts may reduce production. In addition to the seine rules there are additional conflicts such as in the mooring basin. Mechanisms for resolving conflicts at the community level are weak. As a consequence, conflicts resurface or remain unresolved. The tribunal recommended by the fishers is a reflection of their loss of confidence in reaching negotiated agreements among themselves. If co-management is to succeed, more attention must be paid to conflict management. Although having the tribunal may relocate the focal point for conflict management away from the community, the latter still has to invest in conflict management skills in order to use the tribunal effectively as a last resort rather than a first choice in settling fishery matters.

## **Effective communication**

The Grenada fisheries authority has invested heavily in both formal and informal communication that has proven effective. The system of extension officers allocated to particular districts has resulted in close relationships between them and the fishers in these locations. Fishers appreciate this relationship and communicate with officers regularly. However, several fishers pointed out that this informal camaraderie is insufficient to facilitate formal inclusion of their issues and answers into the fisheries decision-making system. They want to have more formal meetings, and especially to receive regular feedback from Fisheries Division. Communication between the Fisheries and Cooperative Divisions is negligible and needs to be improved if cooperatives are to have roles in fisheries management.

## **Coordination**

Arising from communication, there is reasonable coordination at the technical level between NGOs, government and the fishing industry. Post-hurricane recovery, regular workshops and other events are examples. However there is less coordination between the technical and policy levels of government on fisheries matters. The fisheries authority's uncertainty about policy

decisions and support is likely to retard its advance towards co-management since the latter is much more characterised by policy and politics than conventional management.

### **Trust and respect**

The only area in which trust and respect was said to be in short supply was among fishers themselves in terms of conflict and disunity that appear to hinder development and collective action. The dynamics of leadership in the various fishing bodies that arose and faded in Gouyave is an example. It is not likely, however, that levels of trust and respect are so low in the fishing industry as to seriously constrain the chances of fisheries co-management succeeding.

### **Organisational capacity**

Capacity building is an important element in co-management. Where the poor have access to resources that create new and more relevant capabilities among them, they are usually better equipped to extricate themselves from poverty and to sustain livelihoods. Capacity building may include, but is not limited to, training and upgrading of skills, and empowerment. NGOs were very actively involved in trying to create capacity in fishing organisations up to a few years ago. These efforts have now subsided and organisational capacity is still very limited. Several key organisations have failed. The Fisheries Division is limited in its capacity. The two main NGOs that have assisted fishing groups claim that their limited capacity constrains their operations. Means of strengthening the organisational capacities of all stakeholders must be devised.

### **Financial resources**

Expenditure on fisheries management is a matter that concerns policy-makers. It will be important to ensure that the tribunal or whatever structure is put in place is both affordable and efficient. The Fisheries Division does not have significant financial resources to support co-management.

### **External agents**

Grenada has received external funding for physical infrastructure that improves the working conditions and livelihoods of fisherfolk. These improvements are likely to continue. Previously, NGOs received external funds that were passed on to fishing industry initiatives. None of the external interventions has encouraged dependency, and further assistance specifically for co-management would be beneficial. The area of conflict management may be an appealing one for assistance.

### **Net benefits**

It is too early in pre-implementation to determine potential benefits. However, the absence of clear benefits to the fishers is likely to be a serious constraint on them adopting co-management approaches to resolving problems that have been tolerated for generations.

### **Representation in decision-making**

The fisheries authority has not established a system in which fishers are locally or nationally represented formally in a decision-making forum. Fisheries officers have good relationships with fishers and will seek their advice through consultation, but this stops short of decision-making. The several unsuccessful attempts to establish a Fisheries Advisory Committee demonstrate fundamental difficulties in forming and maintaining a representative decision-making body. This need to be addressed for co-management to be successful and, given the prevalence of parish level bodies, perhaps success could first be achieved at this smaller scale of administration.



## **Enforcement**

Since the seine rules are only informal at present, there is no official enforcement of them. Social sanctions and community-level enforcement also do not apply. In the absence of voluntary compliance, the rule system is likely to disintegrate. Stakeholders were initially mixed in their recommendations on who should enforce any new co-management arrangement. In the end enforcement by the government was considered most appropriate, but fishers wished to avoid the normal judicial system. Even if the tribunal is established, it will be vital to ensure adequate enforcement once the rules are incorporated into fisheries regulations. Given the difficulty in enforcing most of the present regulations this will be a challenging task.

## **Property rights**

In the beach seine fishery there is a well-developed customary system of territorial use rights. Some of the fishing locations are being altered by sea defences and erosion, but most are likely to remain. Maintaining this property rights system is at the core of the need for co-management and is a major condition for success.

## **Sharing decision-making**

There is legal provision for a Fisheries Advisory Committee, but several attempts to form and maintain one have not been successful. There is no other process or institution except the meetings of the various cooperatives and associations. At Gouyave the fishing groups are weak as decision-making bodies. The Gouyave Improvement Committee is best placed to provide a local alternative, but so far wishes to limit its intervention to Fisherman's Birthday celebrations. The Fisheries Division and fishers accept top-down management with consultation as the norm. The proposed tribunal is very similar in nature and should therefore be acceptable

## **Decentralisation and delegation**

In the fisheries arena there is no evidence that much decentralisation and delegation of power to the fisheries authority or fishing industry is likely to occur. The Fisheries Division is closely wed to the administration of the ministry in decision-making. The consultations conducted by the Fisheries Division with the industry do not exhibit any move towards delegation and there are no structures set up to accept the consequent responsibilities. The fishers' preference for the tribunal demonstrates that they do not seek to have power delegated to them or take on responsibility for decentralised decisions.

## **Social and cultural fit**

Grenada has experienced more political changes than several neighbouring countries. This includes a socialist phase. This period and colonialism were characterised by governments being very much in charge, although the formation of grassroots organisations was a feature of the socialist era. The expectation remains that government has the bulk of responsibility to make decisions and look after the welfare of the people. Co-management beyond consultation is not a good fit at present in the fishing industry, but there is scope for much improvement in consultative co-management that would not be inconsistent with the socio-cultural environment.

## **Priority action**

The Grenada workshop participants emphasised the need to build more cooperation amongst all stakeholders. One step could be to place more emphasis on using the local ecological knowledge of fishers in management. In tandem with this is strengthening the capacity of fishery organisations and NGOs to support co-management. A final area for action research was the question of how property rights could or should be developed, and in which fisheries would this



be appropriate. Action needed is to demonstrate co-management in order to achieve a common understanding of what it is, especially if it is to advance beyond consultation.

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