



## Aim

To support improvement in the way the MMO communicates and engages with its stakeholders and to build relationships with stakeholders, specifically the fishing industry – as set out in the [MMO Story; the next ten years](#). This project aimed to understand best practice in facilitation in preparation for trialling co-management examples in fisheries management.

## Introduction and methodology

The MMO understands that co-management approaches could help to achieve effective and sustainable outcomes (MMO1205, MMO1205a Fisheries Act 2020) and have stated their ambition to embrace collaborative and ultimately co-management arrangements over the next 10 years in their strategic MMO Goal 4 – Manage an agreed framework for a culture of compliance through leadership, co-management and earned recognition, leading to, where appropriate, self-regulation. Part of supporting this is having good facilitation skills and understanding the context and best ways to support group engagement. Facilitation involves an independent person working with a group of people to co-design a process and manage a discussion or series of discussions to achieve their objectives. Facilitation practice is useful for many daily operational aspects of MMO work.

The guide a) defines facilitation, b) identifies in what circumstances facilitation is needed and works best, c) explores what scales are necessary, d) shows when self-facilitation and independent facilitation are required, e) describes how to manage conflict, f) sets out some of the practicalities including cost and g) finally presents how to evaluate your facilitation.

## Results

The guide sets out that facilitation takes place within the context of engagement and can occur in a one-way, two-way or collaborative/co-management setting. When developing an MMO engagement plan, facilitation requirements and benefits should be considered. Either external and independent or internal trained facilitators can be consulted to develop an engagement plan, facilitate discussions and events and provide an independent review and evaluation of the engagement.

Determining the type of facilitation needed depends on cost, convenience, the complexity and the level of skill required, and the importance of the facilitator remaining neutral in relation to the content. Facilitation can be split into schools and variations, again depending on the nature of the work, as well as online and in-person can be split into group activities happening at the same time or at different times.

Conflict can be affected by personality differences, power and authority issues or where an individual or group feels threatened by another and can rise between individuals or groups. When looking for consensus in a group – it is important to ask the question of ‘what is it good-enough?’ The report provides guidelines on handling conflict, and the importance of addressing the conflict to reach the end goals. Psychological safety is an important consideration, where the facilitator



needs to create and maintain a participatory environment, ensure focused conversations and enable a structured discussion. A 'considerations checklist' is included, which includes both a client /facilitator checklist and a practical considerations list.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The MMO wants to build and maintain more direct and productive relationships with stakeholders, particularly the full breadth of the fishing industry. It is recognised that using trained and practiced facilitators can produce better engagement outcomes from meetings and events. It is valuable to have this guide and checklists to improve engagement.

## MMO comments

This guide to facilitation was commissioned in 2021 following the production of a Co-Management Literature review (MMO1280) for the MMO to support activities related to that practice. Since 2021 the MMO has been implementing new policy that incorporates a lot of engagement e.g., Fisheries Management Plans development, Regional Fisheries Groups, fisheries management measures implementation and new technology rollout. We have benefitted from the expertise shared in this guide.

Following the completion of the guide facilitation training was set up for MMO colleagues. By the end of 2024, over 30 people will have been trained in facilitation at the MMO.

## Further information

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