

New Guidelines for Designing Monitoring Programmes for Co-Managed Fisheries—publication announcement

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The increasing shift towards co-management has prompted fisheries managers to reflect upon their new roles and reconsider their information requirements.

The use of data and information remains fundamental to the management process, but now data collection systems must be able to deliver the diverse information needs of a range of potential stakeholders, tailored according to their objectives, capacity and available resources.

Whilst a vast pool of useful literature already exists, much of it has been written in the context of other sectors or with little emphasis on designing systems specifically for co-managed fisheries. Since 2002, the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) has been funding, through their Fisheries Management Science Programme (FMSP), the development of a new set of guidelines to help co-managers design, or improve existing, data collection systems.

The guidelines have been developed through a collaborative partnership between the Marine Resources Assessment Group, Aqua Sulis Ltd, The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), WorldFish Center, and the Mekong River Commission.

Through a series of participatory research exercises, several DFID-funded projects including the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Project, Integrated Lake Management Project and the Regional Fisheries Information System Project contributed to the development of the guidelines, drawing upon their experiences in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Uganda, Tanzania and west Africa.

The resulting two-part set of guidelines structured around an eight stage participatory design process is intended to complement, existing relevant manuals and guides already published by FAO.

Part I: Practical Guide has been written specifically for co-managers and facilitators working in the field. It offers simple and practical advice on identifying the information needs of

different stakeholders in relation to their management objectives and responsibilities, and developing collaborative ways of collecting and sharing the information effectively.

Part II: Technical Guidelines provide more technical detail on each of the sections included in the Practical Guide, including examples of the types of data that might be of interest to different stakeholders, data collection methods and sources, the design of sampling programs and some guidance on data analysis and interpretation. They not only provide field practitioners with an additional resource, but are also expected to appeal directly to Department of Fisheries and extension staff, research agencies and academic institutions.

Field Testing

The Guidelines have recently been field-tested at eight sites in Bangladesh by the WorldFish Center Community-Based Fisheries Management Project and by the Fourth Fisheries Project.

Using the guidelines, stakeholders representing the Departments of Fisheries and Agriculture, partner NGOs, Community Based Organizations, and other government bodies were able to discuss and agree upon stakeholder roles and responsibilities by means of small group discussions and a voting approach.

Stakeholders were able to identify detailed lists of information requirements to support these roles and responsibilities including explanations for why the information was needed.

Field testing is also underway in the Lower Mekong Basin under the Mekong River Commission's 'Management of Rivers and Reservoir Fisheries' Project.

The final version of the Guidelines incorporating the feedback from field testing and evaluation activities will be published in the *FAO Fisheries Technical Paper* series and circulated to Fisheries Departments of Member States. Downloadable electronic copies will be available free of charge from the FAO website.

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<http://www.fmsp.org.uk>.