FISHER FOLK ORGANISATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN: BRIEFING NOTE ON NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS

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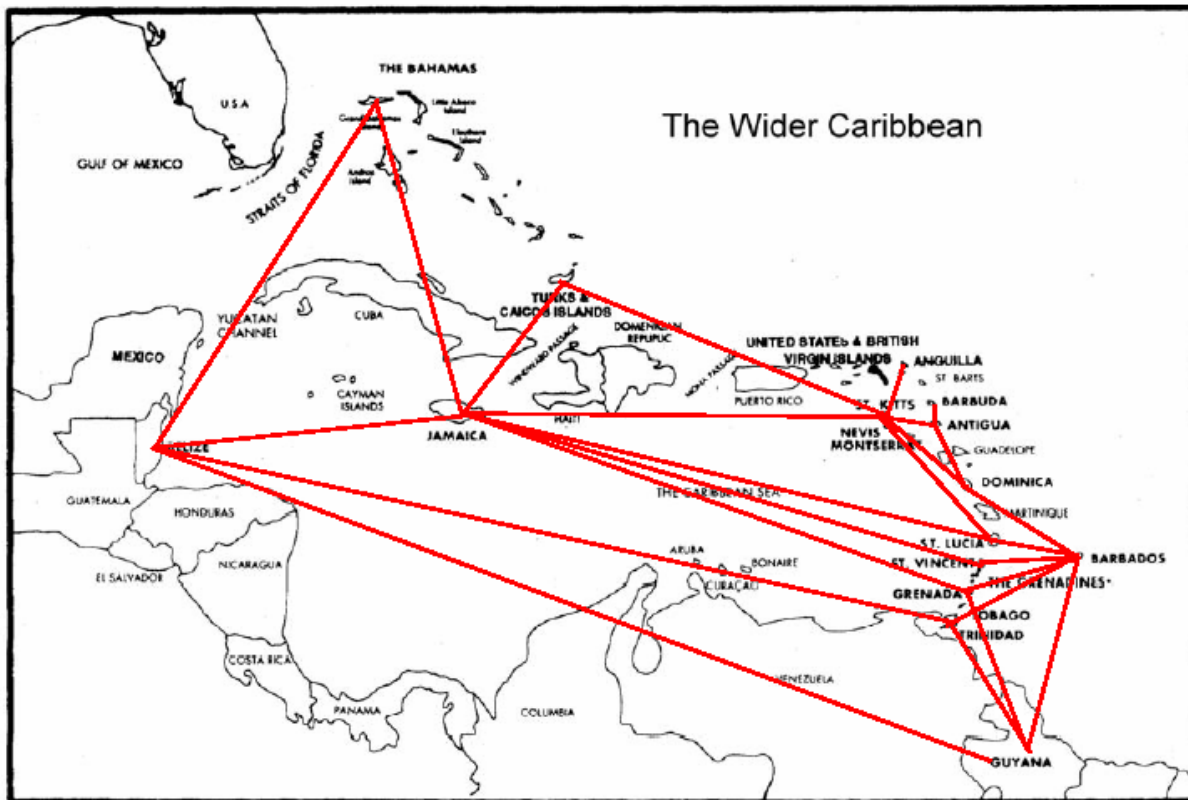
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FISHER FOLK ORGANISATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN: BRIEFING NOTE ON NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS

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Contents

Acronyms

Not all of the acronyms and special terms below are used in this briefing note, but readers are likely to come across them when reading about fisher folk organisations in the Caribbean and may want to refer to this list for information.

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
BARNUFO	Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations
BFCA	Belize Fishermen Cooperative Association Ltd.
BVI	British Virgin Islands
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
CARISEC	CARICOM Secretariat
CCA	Caribbean Conservation Association
CERMES	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
CFP&R	Common Fisheries Policy and Regime
CFRAMP	CARICOM Fisheries Resource Assessment and Management Programme
CFU	CARICOM Fisheries Unit
COTED	Council for Trade and Economic Development
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
FAC	Fisheries Advisory Committee
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
FFO	Fisher folk organisation
FMP	Fisheries Management Plan
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IMA	Institute of Marine Affairs (Trinidad and Tobago)
IOCARIBE	Inter-Governmental Oceanic Sub-commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions

JFCU	Jamaica Fishermen Cooperative Union Ltd.
LFMA	Local Fisheries Management Authority
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NFO	National fisher folk organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
RFO	Regional fisher folk organisation
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMMA	Soufriere Marine Management Area (St. Lucia)
SSMR	Soufriere – Scott's Heads Marine Reserve (Dominica)
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (Belize)
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UWI	University of the West Indies
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Fisher folk organisations (FFOs) were introduced to many locations in the English-speaking Caribbean (now the Member States of CARICOM) during the British colonial period, often in the early 1960s and 1970s. Many of them failed in many places after only a few years and for many different reasons. Although the scenarios of the past were not always of gloom and doom, people remember the failures clearer than the successes. Today we are able to look back on past experiences and learn from them. The benefits of good organising outweigh the costs and the question is not if fisher folk organisations are necessary, but how best to make them sustainable.

This project on *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Organizations* runs from September 2006 to July 2008. It is being implemented by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), through its Secretariat, in financial partnership with the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (CTA) based in the Netherlands.

The overall objective of the project is:

- To contribute to improved income earnings, higher standards of living of fisher folk and sustainable use of fishery resources in the Caribbean

The more specific purpose of the project is to have:

- Institutional capacities of fisher folk organizations developed at the regional, national and community levels.

The purpose of this briefing note is to outline the main elements and considerations of how to proceed. The sections describe who we mean by 'fisher folk' and what some of their characteristics are. They look at organisations and how to go about forming them and operating them successfully. Sections address communication and networking to scale-up from national to regional level.

The aim of the project is to assist fisher folk who want to get organised and sustain their organisations. One of the critical first steps is to understand fisher folk and their perspectives on fisheries matters. We need to appreciate what the incentives for organising are, and how to manage conflict within our Caribbean culture. Several types of incentives are described.

Unless fisher folk truly want to organise, perhaps after participating in awareness and capacity building programmes, it is unlikely that organisations will be established or be sustainable. Global experience shows that FFOs formed without high demand from the fisher folk themselves fail, even when assisted.

There are many types of fisher folk organisations as classified by function, legal designation, structure or combinations of these. A fisher folk organiser must have a good working knowledge of the organisation types likely to be most feasible. Cooperatives and associations are the most common in the region.

There are many facets to fisher folk organising. Most of these are situation-specific. You cannot take a plan or blueprint and simply apply it without adaptation and feedback. Organising people requires particular skills, some of which differ from skills needed to sustain the groups that are formed.

Crisis can be good for mobilisation but, while addressing a series of crises or 'fire-fighting' may still stimulate collective action, it inhibits longer term plans or strategies. It is also important that the policy environment enables self-organisation. Self-organisation is fisher folk being able to help themselves rather than overly rely upon assistance that is not sustainable. It does not mean that no outside help should be offered or accepted. But it does mean that outside help should be phased out.

Communication is the basis for information exchange, awareness and education, learning, capacity building, negotiation, cooperation, coordination, collaboration, conflict management and networking. All of the above are closely interrelated and critical to the success and sustainability of FFOs.

In the 2004 needs assessment, data and information supply or dissemination ranked high as services FFOs were expected to provide to members, their geographic community and the fishing industry. Yet, poor communication skills ranked high as a problem in FFOs. Less was said about FFOs as receivers of communication, but it is likely that this is also widely problematic and must be addressed in this project.

This project aims to facilitate the networking of NFOs to form a regional structure or RFO. Networking is about forming relationships (ties) between countries, organisations or individuals (nodes). The national consultations should confirm support for forming the RFO. However, NFOs still need to critically examine their

readiness to network, and to be realistic about the pros and cons. They may want to determine the level of their involvement. It is better to operate well within capacity than to struggle due to over ambition.

There are many challenges to successfully forming and sustaining FFOs anywhere in the world. The Caribbean presents additional problems due to limited capacities and the difficulties of scaling up organisations over a large and diverse geographic area. This briefing note is intended to provide basic pointers on how to achieve the objective and purpose of the CRFM project. It does not claim to supply all of the answers, but it suggests where many can be found. However, ultimately, the choice is up to fisher folk to chart their way ahead.

Other stakeholders and parties interested in this vital process of development can assist by mapping ways in which success can be achieved, and by facilitating the process of achieving success without controlling it as well. There will be a lot of learning by doing. Both good and bad experiences need to become embedded into institutional memory so that fisher folk organisations and their partners can learn and adapt together to build better and more resilient fisheries institutions.

1. Introduction

This introduction sets the stage for the remainder of the document. It explains the reasons behind the fisher folk organisation project and for preparing this briefing note. It suggests who should benefit from reading this, and what is in the note. Read on and see for yourself.

1.1 Brief history

Fisher folk organisations (FFOs) were introduced to many locations in the English-speaking Caribbean (now the Member States of CARICOM) during the British colonial period, often in the early 1960s and 1970s. The histories of how they arose at different times in different places are not the same, but common inter-related features include:

- Being part of the movement towards independence
- Use for political empowerment of "the small man"
- A means to alleviate poverty and encourage saving
- For pooling money to improve commercial business
- An emphasis on boat owners rather than fishers
- Channelling of government subsidies for fishing
- Efficient supply of inputs for fishery development
- Getting into bigger, better and costlier boats
- Seafood processing for food security and export
- Starting with savings societies and Cooperatives

We see a variety of reasons behind organising, and of different types of organisation (harvest, gear and fuel supply, processing, etc.). Older fishers remember the early cooperatives well. In particular they remember the fact that many of them failed in many places after only a few years and for many different reasons. Some of these reasons include the following:

- Under-capitalisation (not enough funds to run them)
- Limited capacity (leadership, skills, resources, etc.)
- Inadequate support from government agencies
- Membership bases that were too small to be viable
- Little succession planning to groom new leaders
- No follow-up to projects and technical assistance
- Short term planning rather than strategic planning
- Limited oversight and monitoring to give guidance
- Financial mismanagement ("who thief the money?")
- Regulatory agencies did not correct financial wrongs
- Connection to political movements that changed
- Inability to sustain collective action outside of crises
- Government programmes that competed with them

Although the scenarios of the past were not always of gloom and doom, people remember the failures clearer than the successes. Some failures were very personal disappointments. It is important to know the history of fisher folk groups and previous initiatives for organising in various places. This allows us to appreciate how and why events and experiences of the past shape present views even though current circumstances are different.

1.2 Current context

Today we are able to look back on past experiences and learn from them. However, we also have to adapt, because learning from past successes and failures does not adequately prepare us for the present and future if situations have changed. How things have changed again varies by location and the richly diverse nature of Caribbean fisheries, but we have observed:

- There is greater Caribbean integration (e.g. ACS, CARICOM, CARIFORUM, CSME, OAS, OECS)
- Better communication (TV, travel, phone, internet)
- People are more aware of how to run businesses
- People are more aware of how organisations work
- Long term and strategic planning is now customary
- People in fishing industries are better educated
- Fishing is not a job of last resort in several places
- Markets for fish have global linkages to fish trade
- Tourism has expanded as a major fish consumer
- More value-added seafood products are available
- There are more successful groups to use as models
- Government agencies are generally more supportive
- National Fisheries Advisory Committees (FACs)
- There is now a regional fisheries body, the CRFM

Throughout this briefing note we will see how these changing circumstances are presenting both more opportunities and challenges to the establishment and sustainability of fisher folk organisations in the region. However, it is clear that the benefits of good organising outweigh the costs, and that the question is not if fisher folk organisations are necessary, but how best to make them sustainable. That is the main aim of this project.

1.3 Present project

This project on *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Organizations* runs from September 2006 to July 2008. It is being implemented by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), through its Secretariat, in financial partnership with the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation

(CTA) based in the Netherlands. The project is intended to serve the Member States of the CRFM.

The demand for such a project was confirmed by the results of a needs assessment concluded in 2004 and subsequent meetings that involved fisher folk in 2004 and 2005. The 2004 CRFM meeting recommended the formation of a regional network of national fisher folk organizations (NFOs). The meeting recognised the need for strengthening institutional capacities of fisher folk organizations through a strategy for addressing the following issues revealed by the needs assessment:

- Lack of critical mass of NFOs for launching the network defined by the 2004 Belize Workshop
- Fisher folk organizations' weak management skills
- Insufficient access to relevant information by fisher folk
- Fisher folk organizations' limited communication and advocacy skills.

The 2005 meeting produced a *Strategy and Medium Term Action Plan for the Institutional Strengthening of Regional Fisher Folk Organizations - 2006 to 2010* to address the points above. It is through this bottom-up participatory process that the project was designed.

The overall objective of the project is:

- To contribute to improved income earnings, higher standards of living of fisher folk and sustainable use of fishery resources in the Caribbean

The more specific purpose of the project is to have:

- Institutional capacities of fisher folk organizations developed at the regional, national and community levels.

Countries are embarking on this development process from different starting points. There are three groups.

- Group 1: countries with officially recognized NFOs are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.
- Group 2: countries with active primary fisher folk organizations (PFOs) but no officially registered NFO are The Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and Grenadines (Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Turk and Caicos Islands are non-ACP)
- Group 3: countries with no active PFOs or NFOs are Haiti and Suriname

Several types of activities are planned to achieve the project objective and purpose taking into account all three groups. These overlapping activities include:

- Awareness and promotion campaign to further sensitize key stakeholders and actors on the benefits of forming NFOs and the regional network of NFOs
- National consultations to launch of NFOs in the seven Group 2 countries that lack them
- Sensitization of fisher folk in Haiti and Suriname to establish PFOs as a first step to the possible creation of NFOs
- Regional fisheries stakeholders workshop to launch the regional network of fisher folk organisations and provide directions for its development
- Management, communication and advocacy capacities of NFOs and network strengthened
- Training of trainers workshop so that fisheries extension officers' capacities can be enhanced to provide better information, advisory and training services
- Training workshop on management of fisher folk organizations
- Fisher folk and other interested parties provided with relevant information on regional fisheries issues
- Production and distribution of a briefing note on fisher folk organizations

- Production and distribution of a newsletter and stakeholders directory
- Development and maintenance of a web site especially for supporting the network functions

1.4 Purpose of briefing note

There is a lot of work to be done in a short time. To achieve the objective and purpose there must be a clear and shared understanding of how to proceed.

The purpose of this briefing note is to outline the main elements and considerations of how to proceed. Some activities have already taken place (e.g. Training of Trainers Workshop in December 2006), reports have been written (e.g. needs assessment) and there is a fair amount of literature available on fisher folk groups.

The terms of reference (TOR) for this briefing note on fisher folk organizations in the Caribbean, state that it must address matters including:

- a background and rationale for such organizations at the local, national and regional levels to facilitate their participation in the fisheries governance process
- benefits to the fishers and others in having such organisations
- issues affecting their formation and development
- outline of the draft guidelines and strategy for the conducting of the national consultations for the launch of NFOs in Group two countries, and the establishment of the national FFO network
- a communication outline utilising the tools (newsletter, stakeholder directory and website) identified in the project TOR.

The briefing note draws upon, but does not duplicate previous work. We look at the way forward in a series of steps that encompass the project activities. To keep the note brief we point

to these and other sources of information from which readers can seek guidance.

1.5   Intended audiences

Whom do we want to read this briefing note and how should the various audiences use its contents? Here are some of the possibilities in no particular order.

- Project consultants, e.g. CRFM Secretariat staff, local and regional leaders of national consultations —see what is expected of the project, factors to consider, their roles and resources to draw upon
- FFO leaders and members, e.g. Presidents, people on FFO Boards and Committees—see what roles they can play in organising themselves, be aware of positive and negative factors they need to deal with
- Fisheries managers, policy advisers, e.g. Permanent Secretaries, Chief Fisheries Officers, Registrar of Cooperatives—see how to enable, support and facilitate FFO formation and sustainability through official channels and innovative policy
- Fisheries and cooperatives officers, other change agents—see where change is necessary and how to manage change to enhance chances of success
- Researchers, students, trainers—see what aspects require further investigation and new information
- Other interested parties, e.g. fisher folk groups in other regions—see how they can network to assist the process of fisher folk organisation development

In order to reach these diverse audiences we try to use ordinary language where possible and explain special terms rather than use fisheries management language.

1.6   What comes next?

The next section describes whom we mean by 'fisher folk' and what some of their characteristics are. Then we look at organisations and how to go

about forming them and operating them successfully. We move on to communication, which plays a major role in the project and precedes the last section on networking to scale-up from national to regional level. The references and appendices contain additional information intended to supplement the briefing note.

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2.   Fisher folk

If the aim of the project is to assist fisher folk who want to get organised and sustain their organisations, then one of the critical first steps is to understand fisher folk and their perspectives on fisheries matters. We need to appreciate what the incentives for organising are, and how best to manage conflict within our Caribbean culture.

Unless fisher folk genuinely want to organise, perhaps after participating in awareness and capacity building programmes, it is unlikely that their organisations will be established or be sustainable. Global experience shows that FFOs formed without high demand from the fisher folk themselves fail even if they get assistance.

2.1   Who are fisher folk?

'Fisher folk' describes people who perform different types of work and have different roles in the fishing industry. It would be a mistake to lump together all types of fisher folk. The main fisher folk categories are:

- Fishers (male or female; may or may not use boats; captains or crew; full-time or part-time; commercial, recreational or subsistence; inshore or offshore; etc.)
- Boat and gear owners (who may be fishers or not)
- Fish sellers or vendors (who may also own boats)
- Helpers such as fish skinners, scalers, boners etc.

The first two categories are part of the harvest sector (catching the fish) and the latter two are post harvest (after fish are caught and brought ashore). The entire set of participants "from hook

to cook" is called the fish chain. This includes inputs to harvest, harvesting itself, marketing, distribution, and consumption (if the fish is used as food for humans, not bait or animal feed).

In this note we focus on commercial food fisheries in which boats are used. These fisheries are common in Caribbean countries, and what applies to them can serve most situations.

The term fisher folk is not usually applied to:

- Large processors of fish (owners of fish plants)
- Fish buyers (restaurants, hotels, supermarkets)
- Boat agents (who manage fish sales dockside)
- Suppliers of fishing inputs (gear, ice, fuel, etc.)
- Boat builders, shipwrights, marine mechanics
- Fish merchants and traders (local or export)
- Insurance agents and bankers for fisheries
- People engaged in fish farming (aquaculture)
- Fisheries managers, officers, scientists, trainers
- Other government and non-government officers
- Fisher folk households, kin, family and friends
- Fishing communities, consumers or the public
- Other users of the marine environment

Those in the first list are primary stakeholders in the fishery whose livelihoods depend directly on the fish. Those in the second list who depend less directly on the fish, but can still affect or be affected by matters relating to fisheries, are secondary stakeholders and interested parties. In this note we will focus on the primary stakeholders, but take the others into account.

Some countries or FFOs may have different ideas on who fisher folk are in their situation. Check on this by examining laws and definitions in official documents. Leaders in this project need to get to know fisher folk, not just know about them. Spending time with fisher folk before taking action or making suggestions is a good investment in time to help avoid problems later.

2.2 Incentives to organise

Incentives to organise can include all of the elements that contribute to a better life, provided that the benefits outweigh the costs at the level of both the individual and the group. To understand what contributes to a better life we have to understand fisher folk livelihoods. Livelihood partly determines lifestyle and outlook on life. In general, it is what you do to support yourself in life, but it also includes your relationships, knowledge, other assets and culture.

Many fisher folk have to be at sea or in the fish market to earn incomes when fish and fish buyers are plentiful. Fisher folk earnings, well-being and quality of life all depend directly on their productivity (being mainly self-employed). Fisher folk cannot easily afford to abandon income-earning activity. Organisers of fisher folk must take this into account and respect income-earning as an incentive. It is also a reason for having little time to organise. The benefits of organising need to exceed costs of organising. Having immediate benefits helps.

Seasonal fisheries may limit income-earning to certain times of the year, but many fisher folk switch fisheries or jobs (they are multi-occupational) or have other sources of income in order to compensate. Sometimes seasonality is natural (e.g. fish life cycle, hurricane), but it may also be due to fishery regulations and be a point of contention between authorities and industry. So other incentives may be to reduce the seasonality of income earning and the conflicts over regulation.

Fisher folk (especially fishers) are used to danger, risk and uncertainty in life (fish catches, prices, sales, etc.). They may be more willing than people with more stable livelihoods to accept change, surprises and the need to be flexible or adapt to circumstances. Restrictions and rules that prevent them from coping may be rejected. A common motive for collective action and representation is

to reduce rules and constraints that inhibit flexible livelihood strategies. This can include empowerment.

Some incentives are strong and others are weak. The latter may never become strong, or they may require a period of preparation that can be difficult to afford or to sustain before seeing tangible results. CRFM's aim for organised fisher folk to play a greater role in fisheries governance in the Caribbean can be a weak incentive if the process and benefits are not clear to fisher folk. People will enquire about the motive of CRFM. This is why we need awareness and information programmes. But these must be ongoing as situations change, and groups will demand different information as a result of what they have learnt before. Communication is key.

The list of possible incentives or motivating factors for fisher folk organising is long, and will vary by location. The list will change over time and by category within the catch-all term 'fisher folk'. Incentives interact in complex ways so that changing a rule here, or helping an initiative there, may benefit one fisher folk group but disadvantage another. Monitor interacting incentives.

The list of current conditions given in the Introduction contains many items that are motivating or that enable other incentives to work. Providing a blueprint or strict guide on appropriate incentives for organising is not possible. It can be disastrous to try organising fisher folk based on fixed notions or premature guesses of what their incentives for coming together will be.

These are incentives categories for general guidance.

- Improve quality of life etc. through income earning
- Reduce uncertainty or enable strategies for coping
- Raise socio-economic status or power sharing level
- Provide new opportunities for future generations

Organisers must learn to determine specifics through the participatory processes described later in this note.

2.3 Collective action and conflict

Organising is mainly about enhancing cooperation and managing conflict. There is a saying that fisher folk are "different", which usually translates to "difficult". People remark on how individualistic fisher folk, and especially fishers, can be. People forget the cooperation required at sea (in a boat crew) and ashore (in fish processing). People focus on conflict as one of the defining features of fishing industries and fisher folk. So we need to deal with it here and return to it throughout the briefing note.

For organisations to form and remain established the incentives need to work at both individual and group levels. If group incentives are inadequate, collective action (people banding together to pursue a common cause) will be short-lived as each person tries to free-ride or get as much out of the organisation as possible before it fails while contributing as little as possible.

There are steps to solving free-rider problems such as:

- Discuss clear goals with the group
- Arrange to monitor and evaluate progress
- Agree on schedules for achieving results
- Discuss each person's responsibilities
- Have a transparent feedback system
- Manage conflicts without confrontation

If free-rider problems are managed there is a greater chance of collective action. This can be set out as a group effort to reach and implement decisions in steps:

- Determine the aims and objectives of the group
- Agree, preferably by consensus, on action to take
- Implement action and monitor results with feedback

Even if collective action is achieved, such as by rallying around a particular issue or cause, we must remember that fisher folk are not homogenous. Earlier we listed several groups. We can expect competition or conflict even when there is a common goal or objective. Often it is everyday interactions and dynamics of the fishing industry that put groups into some level of conflict that needs to be managed when organising.

Managing conflict 'out in the open' can be difficult in Caribbean culture where we learn to suppress conflict (the non-violent kind in group dynamics) and seldom have explicit or formal mechanisms for dealing with it. There is a tendency for low levels of conflict to persist and occasionally flare up. In early stages of organising more attention should be paid to conflict management to ensure that small matters do not threaten delicate new arrangements, perhaps because factions fail to recognise their shared interests and continue arguing.

Note too that conflict is not always negative. It is a natural part of group dynamics. It may encourage:

- Exchanges of information, ideas and perspectives
- Accelerated learning and problem-solving
- People seeking solutions to acquire new capacities
- Collective action around various shared interests
- Leadership to emerge or be strengthened

Conditions that facilitate conflict management include:

- All the disputing parties are known
- Willingness to negotiate resolution
- Reaching resolution is important for all
- Parties trust conflict management method
- A mutually beneficial outcome is a possibility
- Parties have authority to make deals
- Funds, time and other resources are available
- Resolution is desirable in the wider context

Like most social interactions, conflicts should be well understood before interventions are made. Often there is more than one source of conflict. Identifying sources of conflict and their interactions requires getting past symptoms until the root cause(s) are reached.

There are several stages in conflict management:

- Initiation — a stakeholder or outsider invites help to manage the conflict
- Preparation — conflict analysis, information sharing, rules, participant selection
- Negotiation — articulating interests, creating win-win options, packaging preferred options
- Agreement — concluding jointly on best option package, recording final decisions
- Implementation — publicising outcomes, signed agreement (optional), monitoring

Conflict management is negotiation. Mutually beneficial outcomes usually only occur if participants progress from negotiating on the basis of positions to negotiating in keeping with underlying interests. Positions change, but interests remain the same, or are modified upon understanding the interests of the other side(s). Some authors have set out a system for negotiating on the basis of merit rather than power or positions. Their negotiation principles are:

- Separate the people from the problem — do not personalise the problems or rely on trust
- Focus on interests, not positions — address the root causes, not symptoms or postures
- Invent options for mutual gain — develop a series of innovative solutions and choose later
- Insist on using objective criteria — use agreed upon standards for deciding among options

Again, why this emphasis on conflict management? It is because getting people to form and sustain a formal or informal organisation requires almost constant negotiation among

different interests. We deal with conflict here, up front, because it is easy to get caught up in organising with participatory processes that are oriented towards agreement and consensus, forgetting the importance of managing conflict well at each stage.

It is very difficult to generalise about fisher folk, so we need to be aware of the fundamental characteristics of each situation in order to determine what types of organisations are appropriate and the approaches to organising that are most likely to be suitable and hence effective. These are described in the next two sections.

3. Organisations

'Organisation' has many definitions, but basically it is a group that forms with some structure in order to pursue agreed upon goals and objectives. We are all members of organisations, e.g. business, sports team, church group, carnival band, political party. An organisation can be formal or informal depending on if it is set up under a particular law, has a written constitution, etc.

In many cases we choose the type of organisation that we want to join based on how well it fits our personality and our personal goals. We do not usually form or join an organisation that does not provide us with a tangible or intangible benefit. All sorts of other factors influence organisations and our participation in them. Here we are concerned with local, national and regional FFOs in the project, and what types of organisations they are.

A lot has been written on the theory and practical aspects of organisations. Much of this is relevant to FFOs. We encourage you to research the topic well.

3.1 Types of organisations

There are many types of fisher folk organisation. In the introduction we classified them by function, by legal designation, by structure or combinations of these. For example a cooperative may supply

inputs and market fish, but also be registered as a not-for-profit company.

Although the normal order is to get fisher folk together informally, and then they choose the organisation type that meets their needs and capacity (bearing in mind that this can change over time), any organiser of fisher folk must have beforehand a good working knowledge of the organisation types likely to be most feasible. In many countries this comes down to:

- Study group – pre-cooperative body in many places
- Association – may or may not be legally formalised
- Cooperative – governed by cooperative legislation
- Trade union – governed by laws on unionisation
- Business firm – if profit-making, can be cooperative

Most organisations, even informal ones, have a written constitution that may be brief and simple or long and complicated depending on a number of factors. It is important that the constitution accurately describe the type of organisation, and especially its fundamental reason for existence. Fisher folk organisers should be aware of various types and formats for constitutions. It is often possible to use standard templates and fill in only unique details. National networking may get some non-fisher folk (e.g. lawyers, business people) into the structure to add capacity through their professional skills. We can call these 'friends of fisher folk' here.

3.2 Organisational structure

Form and function are related. Often structure will be dictated by law as for cooperatives and companies. These laws set out the minimum membership, required committees or board of directors, bylaws or regulations for decision-making at different levels etc. However, a large number of structural options will usually be left up to the fisher folk to decide. Some of these include:

- Eligible members – allow all or only some fisher folk
- Categories of membership – with rights attached
- Whether to allow non-voting 'friends of fisher folk'
- Size and number of executive and sub-committees
- Paid or volunteer management personnel or both
- Responsibilities of boards and committee members
- Full organisation or steering/core group of leaders
- Tall or flat organisation in terms of power structure
- Branches/sub-groups by location, fishery type, etc.

The secondary level or national fisher folk organisation (NFO) can be an umbrella body for different kinds of primary organisations unless legal restrictions exist such as often with cooperatives. It may be necessary or useful to have NFOs for each type of primary group. For example one can appreciate having one national body for the longline fishery and another for the lobster fishery if their interests are not similar and the primary organisations are site-based. However, they may form a national tertiary level body that represents all fisher folk, even as a council or committee. Given the small physical sizes and fishing industries of most CRFM members, one NFO will suffice in most cases without stretching organisational capacity.

3.3 Selecting an organisation

One way to systematically compare the features of organisations according to the various types and structures in order to select the most suitable is to set out options and selection criteria in a matrix or table. The start of a simple matrix comparing an association with a cooperative is shown below. Try filling in more.

Selection Matrix	Type of organisation	
Form or function	Association	Cooperative
Governed by law	Maybe	Yes
Under Co-ops Dept	No	Yes
Under Fish. Dept.	Maybe	No
Min. membership	Unspecified	10 people

Draw alternative structures for the organisation using organograms, bearing in mind that structures change. Try to keep the structure of a new organisation, such as the NFO, as simple as possible to start with. Avoid a complicated structure, or make it a future phase.

3.4 Organisations evolve

Structure, or form, and function must be compatible. It may be necessary to change either of these to ensure that an organisation is (more) successful. If primary organisations are weak, it may be necessary to start with a NFO that is primarily a council or steering group until the primary organisations can be strengthened. Or it may be necessary to have non-fisher folk members to attract particular skills to organisations at the start. It is important to start with a core group of key people to assist in forming or strengthening the NFO quickly.

The CRFM needs assessment found that FFOs were both recognised and non-recognised, and both active and inactive. The project aims to establish recognised active FFOs. Organisers need to determine the initial status of the groups and chart courses (develop action plans) for them to evolve. In nature and business, only the fittest usually survive. FFOs that are not viable may be re-organised or merged or otherwise transformed, but occasionally some have to be abandoned in order to focus on others that are more feasible. Be practical.

A thorough organiser will construct a timeline showing the history of FFOs in the country or particular location. This helps people to appreciate and discuss objectively the types of FFOs that have emerged in the past and what has happened to them. It can illustrate the major events in FFO organising and the consequences of those events. Groups can try to forecast what events they think

will happen in the future and the course of evolution that they see for their FFOs as a result. The events should be both challenges and opportunities.

Given the short period of the project, consider forming a national council or alliance as the NFO if it is not possible to formally establish a full NFO. This NFO should include fisher folk leaders and other key people in a core group that agrees to work together over an extended period (often a few years). It is important, however, to ensure that this type of NFO is accepted as legitimate by fisher folk, the government and other key partners. A council or alliance style of NFO is a flexible structure. It has already been used successfully to form NFOs (e.g. BARNUFO in Barbados) and requires fewer resources to initially sustain itself than a full organisation.

This is one way to ensure that the core group has the opportunity to build an appropriate NFO in stages. It is based on a national network and this may facilitate its involvement in the proposed regional network of NFOs.

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4.   Organising

There are many facets to fisher folk organising. Many of these are situation-specific. You cannot take a plan or blueprint and simply apply it without adaptation and feedback. Organising people requires particular skills, some of which differ from skills needed to sustain the groups that are formed. In this section we present some steps in organising and the most essential skills.

4.1   Steps to take

Here is a simplified set of steps that can be taken, but bear in mind that it may be necessary to go back and forth between steps, to repeat some in loops and to add or amend, as the situation requires. Learn to adapt.

1.   Investigation by government and/or fisher folk representatives trained in December 2006 to confirm demand for national and regional FFOs

2.   Promote NFO and RFO concepts by meeting with fishers and primary FFOs and other key people
3.   Form a core group of fisher folk and key change agents to carry forward the NFO and RFO process in partnership with government and other agencies
4.   Hold national consultation on NFO and networking to form the RFO to discuss preferences and decide on form, function, structure etc. of NFO and RFO, including how to sustain them to meet FFO needs
5.   Form or strengthen the NFO in partnership with government for legitimacy and formal acceptance
6.   Promote NFO official and fisher folk recognition by maintaining contact with stakeholder and partners
7.   Plan strategically and implement plans of action for sustainability, making use of participation in RFO

There are no more than four months in which to take steps 1 to 6, but 7 extends indefinitely into the future. To accomplish these steps certain skills must be used.

4.2   Stakeholder analysis

Be sure to know who are the primary and secondary stakeholders and take them into account from the start.
Stakeholder analysis identifies stakeholders by asking:

- Who is affected by the situation being addressed?
- What are the interests of various fisher folk groups?
- How does each group perceive the NFO and RFO?
- What resources can groups or key people supply?
- What are the groups' organizational responsibilities?
- Who should benefit, or be protected from, changes?
- What conflicts may groups have with each other?

- What activities satisfy the interests of the groups?

It is useful to situate stakeholders in a wider context so that all can see a 'big picture' with more objectives that can be shared by various groups. One such context is integrated coastal management (ICM) as shown below.
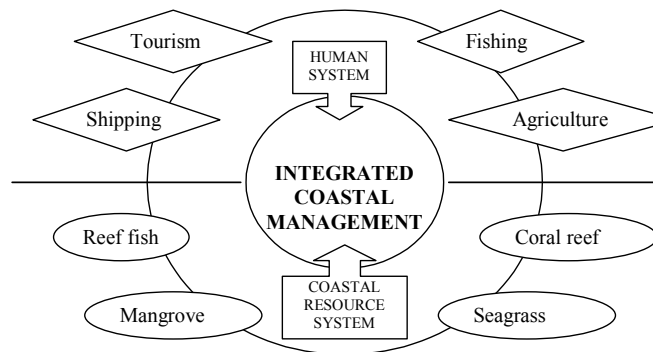
4.3 Mobilising fisher folk

Crises are good incentives around which to mobilise. They prompt collective action, learning and adaptation in a short time. Is there a crisis in the fishery or location that you are concerned with? Threats must be real and immediate, but can often come from either the harvest or post harvest parts of the fish chain. Since all parts of the chain are linked, what affects one part of the fishing industry often impacts on others. Determine incentives for organising (discussed earlier) and see if there are any threats that highlight the urgency to get organised.

Mobilising fisher folk involves processes such as:

- Holding visioning forums on the future of the fishing industry and the national and regional roles of FFOs
- Developing NFO and RFO organisational mission, goals and objectives; organisational structure; plans (strategic and action) to address capacity, financing, leadership, membership and many more factors
- Holding meetings to discuss the above with diverse stakeholder groups to reach

consensus if possible, and agree on the way forward for the NFO and RFO
- Deciding on names for the new organisations
- Seeking out wider community partners to build a base of support among members of the public
- Appointing representatives of the organisation to serve as spokespersons and champions at large

Activities such as the above require access to skills such as meeting planning (especially for the national consultation), facilitation, recording meeting notes, etc.

4.4 Field craft

The mixture of art and science, process and practice that allows an organiser to be successful is called 'field craft'. Skills are as essential as practical experience. The skills and abilities of a trained facilitator are among the most critical. Such a person:

- Distinguishes process from content
- Manages the client relationship
- Prepares thoroughly for planning
- Uses time and space intentionally
- Evokes participation and creativity
- Maintains objectivity at all times
- Reads underlying group dynamics
- Releases blocks to the process
- Adapts to the changing situation
- Shares responsibility for process
- Demonstrates professionalism
- Shows confidence and authenticity
- Maintains personal integrity

Good field craft also includes:

- Being open-minded, creative and respectful
- Being sensitive to culture, gender, age, poverty
- Being modest and humble, not acting superior
- Putting people at ease with a sense of humour

- Having a clear understanding of the different concepts and processes of organizing
- Being familiar with participatory processes
- Having skills in establishing rapport, conflict management and group maintenance
- Being able to work with professionals involved in managing marine and coastal resources
- Knowing when to chill-out and 'let go' of a process
- Having interviewing, documentation and other skills related to effective communication
- Knowing the various audiences at meetings
- Knowing the backgrounds of the key leaders
- Becoming acquainted with the topics fisher folk and other stakeholders want to discuss (their agendas)
- Preparing appropriate techniques (interviews and visualization techniques) that suit the participants
- Preparing secondary materials as background information in advance of being asked for it

4.5 Quest for answers

Searching questions will be asked in the process of organising. Most will be genuinely constructive. Some may be aimed at destabilising the process or casting doubt on the abilities of FFO leaders. In either case, be prepared to answer questions such as the following:

- Is organising legally feasible? Under cooperatives, fisheries, company, not-for-profit or other laws?
- Who has legal jurisdiction over the group formed?
- Does the entity with jurisdiction understand FFOs?
- Is organising politically feasible, or will it be seen as threatening politics depending on whom is involved?

- What is the current political support for organizing?
- Is there capacity among stakeholders to organize and represent themselves?
- Can fisher folk articulate their concerns and convey their interests clearly to other stakeholders?
- Will FFO leaders volunteer, recognizing that there is mutual value to be gained from organizing, or will organizing and sustaining mainly be paid jobs?
- Can criteria for NFO membership (eligibility) be structured to take advantage of professional skills?
- Can NFO and RFO members agree on processes for consensus-driven decision-making to address matters that reduce the risk of unsustainability?
- Is organizing financially feasible, with opportunities and alternatives for sustainability?
- For profit-making, what is the availability of credit or investment capital for FFO activities?
- Is organizing socio-culturally feasible? Are people ready to participate and take collective action, or are they inhibited by past negative FFO experiences?
- How best to cope with economic, social and cultural diversity among the stakeholders and the history of positive or negative interactions among them?
- Is the scale of fisher folk organising (nationally and regionally) manageable now and sustainable?
- Can fisher folk agree on objectives for the RFO, and a structure, that meet diverse national needs?

Prepare for such queries in the national consultation process. Organisers may even wish to pose them to fisher folk in order to stimulate discussion and allow the interests of stakeholders to be shared and examined.

4.6 Change agents

The success of this project is based largely on the effectiveness of its change agents: the persons trained at the workshop in December 2006 along

with key leaders who form the core group. Change agents:

- Commonly include NGOs, academic institutions, government and other development agencies
- Act in roles of catalysts and facilitators of change
- Are not meant to command or control the change
- Empower fisher folk and enhance their capabilities
- Create an impetus for action but maintain objectivity, mainly providing technical and analytical skills
- Provide services such as information and advice, innovative ideas, expertise, organizing, research, advocacy, financial and other resource mobilisation

Levels of trust and respect between fisher folk and the change agent must be high. Problems arise when people become too dependent upon the change agent or when the change agent directly interferes in the change process, rather than guiding it or serving as a catalyst. Problems can also arise when the change agent's views on FFOs are not acceptable to the fisher folk or government. Change agents must be selected with care. Not everyone is suitable for this critical role.

Networking increases the ability of change agents to learn and adapt. It also allows them to engage in advocacy to influence public policy. The latter may be a sensitive issue in this project where governments and an inter-governmental agency (the CRFM) must be key players in the process without controlling it or excluding the meaningful participation of fisher folk.

4.7   Core group as executive body

The project will seek to strengthen existing NFOs that already have an executive body such as a board of directors or managing committee. For new NFOs, the core group of key leaders mentioned previously can become the executive body of the NFO even if later it develops from a council into a fuller organisation, goes directly into the latter structure, or remains a council.

The core group:

- Facilitates information exchange among fisher folk
- Develops dialogue and provokes discussion about resource management issues and governance
- Facilitates community organizing for meetings
- Identifies problems, issues and opportunities through networking with different stakeholders
- Assists in institutionalizing participatory or other decision-making as appropriate to the situation
- Identifies stakeholders that may have arisen or become more relevant after the initial analysis
- Acts as change agents in promoting the NFO and RFO

Core group members may volunteer to be involved based on personal motivation, or they may be selected by the main change agents and/or fisher folk leaders.

Core group members should meet these criteria:

- Be credible and accessible to fisher folk
- Be in touch with a diversity of stakeholders
- Be well-respected, conscientious and resourceful
- Have good oral and written communication skills
- Be open-minded and genuinely desire change
- Be efficient, fair and transparent in decision-making
- Act mainly with consensus and collaboration
- Be determined to lead but not dominate the process

The core group should consider taking advantage of NGO board effectiveness training or something similar. Early investment in this training should pay dividends later as the NFO progresses more smoothly and with a confident leadership. Struggle may be unnecessary.

4.8 Developing leadership

The core group and any NFO formed will need a good leader. Consult the book by Almerigi on *Leadership for fisherfolk* specially prepared for the CARICOM region.

A good and effective leader:

- Is willing to share power with the group
- Listens, communicates and collaborates
- Welcomes constructive criticism anytime
- Expresses the values of the organization
- Enables others to act as team players
- Encourages by recognising contributions
- Inspires a shared vision and enlists others for it
- Pulls together strengths and talents of the group
- Has a caring and positive attitude towards people
- Values consensus, and takes the time to reach it
- Is open-minded, flexible and willing to compromise
- Leads by example, considering group over self.
- Plans small wins to promote a culture of success by celebrating accomplishments
- Challenges the process (pioneers, searches for opportunities, experiments, takes reasonable risks)

It is critical to develop excellent leadership and plan for succession from the earliest stages of organising. One of the common fears at this time is that power will be concentrated into the hands of the core group. This fear can be dispelled by developing leadership both in and outside of the core group in an equitable manner.

4.9 Building capacity

Building capacity is essential in developing fisher folk organisations and preparing them for playing a more meaningful role in fisheries governance. It is not the absence of fisher folk organisations that is always the problem. Organisations exist, but most are structurally and operationally weak. The project intends to address this partly through the formation of NFOs networked into a RFO to provide greater overall capacity and to build the primary groups. It is not intended to sacrifice primary organisations to form the national and regional groups, but to use the higher levels as conduits for channelling resources. This point must be made clear.

CANARI has developed a framework for capacity building with seven main elements that organisations should focus upon. It illustrates the breadth of capacity building, beyond just training, that is required:

- World view—vision and mission guiding capacity requirements
- Culture—an organisation's distinctive climate and way of operating
- Structure—roles, functions, positions, supervision, reporting, etc.
- Adaptive strategies—ways of responding to changing environments
- Skills—knowledge, abilities and competencies for effective action
- Material resources—technology, finance and equipment required
- Linkages—relationships and networks for action and resource flows

Organisers can build capacity by organising with fisher folk rather than organising for fisher folk. Learning by doing (running meetings, preparing reports, decision-making, conflict management etc.) is a powerful tool for building capacity. The project encourages skill transfer.

5. Sustaining

The next challenge is to move beyond forming or strengthening the NFO to establish a sustainable arrangement for continuity. Crisis can be good for mobilisation but, while addressing a series of crises or 'fire-fighting' may still stimulate collective action, it inhibits longer term plans or strategies. The NFO needs to be able to weather minor crises in stride.

This section examines how the NFO can be sustained. It focuses on planning, the roles of various partners, retaining capacity and financial security. Where there is no history of FFOs sustaining themselves it is useful to examine successful similar groups such as farmer or other producer organisations.

It is also important that the policy environment enables self-organisation. Self-organisation is fisher folk being able to help themselves rather than overly rely upon assistance that is not sustainable. It does not mean that no outside help should be offered or accepted. But it does mean that outside help should be phased out.

Successful, sustainable organisations usually have:

- A strategic and participatory planning process
- A competent elected leadership with advisers
- Regular meetings with members and partners
- A means of communicating regularly with members
- A means of delegating tasks and responsibilities
- Orientation and training for new (board) members
- Social time together to strengthen social networks
- Working relationships with powerful key players
- A diversified and flexible sound financial portfolio

5.1 Institutional analysis

Institutional analysis is a participatory method used to identify existing legislation, policies and regulations for fisheries and coastal resource management at different levels of government. It covers both formal and non-formal institutions such as property rights and tenure arrangements in order to determine who defines rights to exploit resources, who has access to resources, and the rules that must be followed. It also evaluates the levels of participation of resource users in resource management (conservation and development) along the entire fish chain. It is often done prior to planning.

Conducting an institutional analysis involves:

- Collecting secondary data on stakeholders; their organisations (mandate, functions, membership, structure, capacity, etc.)
- Determining local institutional arrangements (property rights, rules, regulations, boundaries, decision-making, monitoring and enforcement)
- Investigating higher institutional arrangements (laws, policy, legislation, regional regulation, programmes)
- Sorting the data, focusing on relationships among institutional arrangements and organizations
- Identifying complementarities, conflicts, overlaps and gaps in the institutional arrangements and organisations which support or hinder governance
- Identifying what is needed to better support fisheries governance, e.g. new or amended laws, practices, organizations and enforcement mechanisms
- Recommending strategies for implementing new patterns of relationships and decision-making

The output can be used by fisher folk and government for dialogue and debate about FFO development.

5.2 Strategic and action planning

A strategic planning process that has been used in Caribbean marine and coastal management situations is shown below. It has been used by fisher folk groups.

Participatory Strategic Planning
Based on: The Technology of Participation

Focus Question: The basis for planning - the major topic to be worked on.

Shared Practical Vision: The practical picture of the desired future.

Barriers/Blocks: The underlying obstacles or issues preventing us from realising the vision.

Strategic Directions: The proposed actions to deal with the obstacles and move toward the vision.

Action Plans: The substantial actions required to carry out the new directions.

A specific sequence of stages is followed in order to progress logically, but within the overall sequence there may be feedback loops that allow plans to be evaluated and revised. The strategic planning process is run as a very effective meeting, often held over two to four days. At the end, the strategic plan produced should be acceptable to all of the stakeholders. Ideally, the latter organisations should each have their own strategic plan that is integrated with the resource management plans so that roles and responsibilities are very clear, especially for the implementation phase.

The action plans should cover short periods (90 days is suggested) and be designed for simple monitoring and evaluation so that adaptive institutional learning by the NFO is facilitated without much additional effort. There are many guidelines on proven processes for doing this successfully. This is facilitated when the objectives are designed to be SMARTER.

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound
- **E**valuated
- **R**eviewed

5.3 *Maintaining capacity, leadership and membership*

We previously discussed organising to also build capacity. Maintaining capacity cannot be 'done' by change agents or outsiders. An external agent can promote or stimulate capacity building but should not lead or take responsibility for an NFO's

capacity development. The NFO's leaders and members must take charge and make decisions. Leadership must emerge from within the organization core group, and the organization's members must do most of the required work. Any FFO can benefit from external expertise and advice, but its own managers must be in the driver's seat ready to decide, act and learn.

Maintaining capacity involves acquiring new knowledge and applying it in the pursuit of organizational goals. Learning by doing, and adaptive learning, is critical to capacity which is promoted by the following factors:

- A policy environment that is conducive to change
- Fisher folk who are committed to provide leadership
- Clear goals, objectives and priorities for action
- A critical mass of members and stakeholders involved in, and committed to, building capacity
- Transparent decision-making and good governance
- Adequate other resources for developing capacity

5.4 *Roles of external agents*

External agents (entities that are not stakeholders and may be from other countries such as donor agencies and big NGOs) can be either assets or liabilities to the process of sustaining FFOs. Sometimes external agents approach FFOs, but often it is the reverse as FFOs seek project funds and technical assistance.

External agents as potential assets:

- Provide many operational resources
- Offer linkages to large global networks
- Attract attention from other agencies
- Stimulate new plans and perspectives
- Facilitate building capacity quickly

External agents as potential liabilities:

- Encourage dependency on assistance

- Too short term to assure sustainability
- May impose own views and agendas
- Can overwhelm small organisations
- Often ignore national plans in progress

External assistance should be used sparingly and strategically in order to avoid creating dependence.

5.5 *Sustainable financing*

Given the previous caution about dependence, one of the major challenges is to obtain sustainable financing. The choice of which financing mechanism(s) to utilise is based on analysing several factors such as:

- Financial (funds needed; revenue generation, flow)
- Legal (legal support for financing; new laws needed)
- Administrative (collection; enforcement; corruption)
- Social (willingness to pay; equity; poverty impacts)
- Political (government support; enabling policy; risk)
- Environmental (impacts; uncertainty; irreversibility).

Sources of financing that may be available include:

- Government subventions, revenue allocations
- Government grants, bonds and taxes earmarked for conservation, small business or poverty alleviation
- Grants and charitable donations (depends on status)
- Bilateral and multilateral donors, private foundations
- Big international non-government organizations
- Local or overseas private sector partnerships
- Trust funds and benefactor endowments
- Membership dues especially from sponsor members

- Fees (entry to fishing areas; harvest operations)
- Tourism-related operations in managed areas
- Voluntary contributions by tourists and tourism firms
- Cost recovery mechanisms applied to members
- Real estate and developer rights of coastal property
- Conservation concessions, incentives if applicable
- Fishing industry revenue sharing with government
- Fishery-related services to members, non-members
- Eco-labelling and product certification payments
- Recreational fishing licence fees and taxes
- Aquaculture licence fees and taxes shared
- Share of fines from prosecuting illegal fishing
- Investments linked to marine conservation
- Loans and venture capital financing
- Income derived from local enterprises such as handicrafts, aquatic products

Not all of the above are viable options at present in the region and all require thorough investigation prior to being included in the NFO's investment portfolio. It is appropriate to seek professional financial advice.

5.6 *Role of government and NGOs*

One of the critical aspects of sustaining FFOs is to ensure that partnerships endure and that the partners (particularly in government) play appropriate roles. It is necessary for government to remain a partner while not causing the FFO to become dependent upon it or co-opted to policies or practices. Roles of government agencies include:

- Providing enabling legislation to authorise and legitimise the right to organize and form FFOs

- Determining the extent, form and process of decentralization (power-sharing), if applicable
- Recognising the legitimacy of community-based informal management systems, e.g. MPAs set up by fishers in Jamaica, traditional seine in Grenada
- Addressing problems and issues beyond the scope of FFO capabilities and jurisdiction
- Providing technical and some financial assistance
- Ensuring accountability of FFO through overseeing arrangements and dealing with abuse of authority
- Facilitating conflict management and appeals
- Monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement
- Applying regulatory standards equitably
- Doing research, training and public education
- Maintaining a forum or space in which fisher folk partners can interact on neutral ground
- Being the 'gatekeeper' or ultimate authority in case FFO partners do not act responsibly
- Sharing management responsibility and authority

In the past non-fishery NGOs have not helped as much in the organisation and operation of FFOs as they have in some other parts of the world. However, they often have useful projects with coastal communities that are relevant to FFO goals and activities. More attention can be paid to partnering with local NGOs and starting a mentoring relationship with fledgling FFOs. This may be more acceptable to all parties concerned than for government agencies to play 'big brother' given the disparity in power between them and most FFOs. An interesting exception is the power of FFOs in Belize.

The multi-stakeholder Fisheries Advisory Committees (FACs) also have a role in sustaining FFOs, and the NFO in particular. One would expect the NFO to be represented on the FAC and perhaps other bodies of government, civil society and the private sector. Being on the FAC allows the NFO more direct formal access to policy and to network with other key stakeholders.

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6. Communicating

Communication is the basis for information exchange, awareness and education, learning, capacity building, negotiation, cooperation, coordination, collaboration, conflict management and networking. All of the above are closely interrelated and critical to the success and sustainability of FFOs.

In the 2004 needs assessment, data and information supply or dissemination ranked high as services that FFOs were expected to provide to members, their geographic community and the fishing industry. Yet, poor communication skills ranked high as a problem in FFOs. Less was said about FFOs as the receivers of communication, but it is likely that this is also widely problematic and must be addressed in this project.
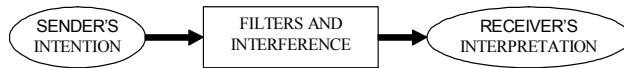
This section outlines a communication strategy for the formation or strengthening of the NFOs and creating the RFO. Each sub-section identifies target audience, main messages, the products and pathways for them.

6.1 How communication works

Communication is a process that is often taken for granted since all of us communicate on a daily basis. However, in development communication, such as employed in fisher folk organising, it is necessary to pay attention to detail and plan all communication carefully. These terms are often used in planning:

- Targets: end users of communication, e.g. fishers
- Message: main set of points to be communicated
- Product: package, e.g. video, newspaper article
- Pathway: channel or event, e.g. workshop, lecture

The targets are the end receivers and users of the message that is conveyed by pathways using specific products. Careful planning helps to ensure that the inevitable filters and interference (biases, distractions etc) do not irreparably distort or block the message.

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┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐
│  SENDER'S   │─────▶│ FILTERS AND │─────▶│  RECEIVER'S │
│  INTENTION  │      │INTERFERENCE │      │INTERPRETATION│
└─────────────┘      └─────────────┘      └─────────────┘
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Although professional communicators may identify a host of target audiences, and a variety of means for reaching them all, it is best to keep an initial strategy simple and test it out thoroughly before expanding. It is also crucial to remember that communication can be very expensive in money and time. Budget both wisely.

6.2   *Background information*

The CRFM needs assessment report contains a lot of information on information needs and patterns. In 2004 an overwhelming majority of fisher folk interviewed said they got information mainly from fisheries authorities and the mass media. When FFOs communicated it was often face-to-face with individuals or small groups.

The assessment also found that little use was made of email, the internet or computer-based media, but that fisher folk wanted more electronic communication. A critical question is whether they, fisheries authorities and other stakeholders are adequately prepared for it. This outline is for target audiences that are not yet fully prepared for electronic communication. A mix of media is used to reach audiences at various stages of readiness and to test their preparedness for internet.

This strategy is meant to assist the CRFM Secretariat in implementing this project, but it can also be adopted and adapted by primary FFOs, NFOs and the RFO. If many groups use a similar communication strategy they are more likely to network successfully to each other. This will be necessary in the RFO. It should be part of their work plans for each to have a strategy.

Communicating is dynamic. Targets and messages will change over time and with particular circumstances. In the sub-sections below the focus is on communication aimed mainly at getting the RFO up and running. The communications of primary FFOs, NFOs and the RFO will be aimed at supporting their own strategic plans.

6.3   *Marine policy and management*

The marine policy and management target audiences include policy makers and advisers e.g. government ministers, Permanent Secretaries, heads of fisheries and other government departments and agencies with marine jurisdiction, heads of major NGOs and regional organisations such as other CARICOM bodies, OECS-ESDU, FAO-WECAFC etc.

These are people and organisations relevant to the CRFM Council of Ministers, the Caribbean Fisheries Forum and the entire network of the CRFM members and Secretariat. The main CRFM messages include:

- Fisher folk are becoming more organised and better networked as part of regional integration
- FFOs have critical roles to play in all members and organs of the CRFM meeting fisheries objectives
- Arrangements for fisheries governance, policy and management should enable FFOs at all levels to organise and play meaningful roles in fisheries

The messages are inter-related to reinforce each other. They aim at creating or enhancing an environment in which all levels of FFOs can flourish and develop. They seek to remove the threats to success while presenting new opportunities for FFOs, especially in partnerships.

Products and pathways can be mixed in combinations. These audiences tend to be highly literate, but prefer to receive large amounts of information in concise formats. Well designed figures and tables are often appreciated. They are used to formal presentations and reports. Messages must be bold and clear via:

- Short (2-4 page) newsletter with graphics, bullet points, photos and call-out boxes for emphasis
- Web site with a page specifically on policy that summarises key current issues and suggested solutions with clear processes for implementation
- Email to key people who can champion the FFO development initiative and influence others to help
- Slide (PowerPoint) presentations useful for short briefing sessions, preferably with sound or script
- Downloadable reports (20-50 pp.) to give policy advisers sufficient information to understand FFO topics thoroughly and to advise with confidence
- Executive summaries (1 p.) of the above reports for those already familiar with the details or who need a quick overview before proceeding
- Presentations of slides, reports and papers at technical meetings for policy advisers, planners
- One-on-one promotional sessions with leaders to share project products and the expected outcomes
- Remarks as invited speaker at high-level meetings, conferences, seminars or special public events

Not all of these communications may be generated as part of this project, but the entire CRFM structure should be seen and used to engage policy for FFOs.

6.4 *Fisher folk and their associates*

Fisher folk, both those already in organisations and those who are not, are the main targets of the FFO project and its communication strategy. Associates refer to most of the diverse secondary stakeholders previously listed. Some work in the fishing industry and others (some household members, spouses, children) may not. Yet all are closely linked to fisher folk and are potentially quite influential. In some places they form supportive groups (e.g. Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association). Main messages for fisher folk include:

- There are multiple benefits from being in FFOs now with more opportunities than existed in the past
- Fisher folk are capable of forming sustainable organisations at local, national and regional levels
- Multi-level FFOs have a meaningful role to play in fisheries governance and development in the region

These messages are promotional and motivational in addition to raising awareness and educating about the changing circumstances that open new opportunities. It is important to be able to provide evidence to back up these points. Fisher folk will demand proof.

The products and pathways for these targets include:

- Stakeholder directory describes fisher folk groups and facilitates information exchanges among them
- Web site with information on FFO organising along with practical tips for both harvest and post harvest
- Posters displayed at locations patronised by fisher folk and aimed at informing and motivating action
- Radio 'spots', live panel discussions and call in shows that stimulate discussion 'on the streets'
- Television documentaries that highlight contributions of fisher folk to Caribbean societies and economies emphasising the importance of organisations
- Newspaper articles reporting on the progress of the project and the plans for FFOs at all three levels
- One-on-one promotional sessions with FFO leaders to share products and expected project outcomes

Fisher folk are clearly the most important category of audience in this project. Every attempt should be made to meet their needs through very close monitoring and evaluation of communication strategy implementation.

6.5   Other interested parties

Many other parties will be interested in this project and should be kept informed. Interested parties can evolve into stakeholders as they are drawn into the process. Some may be external agents that have valuable ideas or resources to contribute. However, while they form an audience, they are secondary to the previously described groups. Communication to this audience can be covered to a large extent by material and messages prepared for the other audiences. Main messages are:

- Fisher folk organisations will need assistance that respects their ideas and values
- Assistance rendered must not foster dependency
- Efforts must be made to avoid new competing or conflicting initiatives that can re-rail FFO progress

The products and pathways for these targets for this audience include all of those previously mentioned. In addition the following should be considered:

- Presentations at major international conferences
- Face-to-face meetings with researchers, donors and others at major international conferences
- Messages on project progress to international email lists concerned with fisheries and organisations

The CRFM Secretariat must make every effort to use a network approach to communication. For example it can decentralise and devolve by arranging for local FFOs or the fisheries authority to distribute newsletters and other communications rather than do this from its offices, even if this is feasible. Meaningful devolution can occur where the local participants are allowed to determine the content of communications and to take ownership of the communication strategy themselves.

7.   Networking

This project aims to facilitate the networking of many NFOs to form a regional structure or RFO. This section describes some features of networks, and the pros and cons of the main options available.

7.1   What is networking?

Put simply, networking is about forming relationships (ties) between countries, organisations or individuals (nodes). This can be shown in a simple diagram.
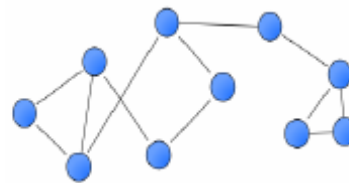
The nature of the relationships determines the nature and value of the networks. Some networks are based purely on business or financial transactions, a great many are primarily for information exchange and all of us have networks based on friendship. Like the latter, the networks in this project will comprise a mix of relationships. Network analysis is a technical field, but fisher folk organisers only need to know the basics.

7.2   NFOs and networks

In each location the ideal is to form or strengthen a single NFO, such as an association or cooperative, which represents all active and recognised primary FFOs. This may not be feasible within the next few months for many reasons including limited time to mobilise, delays in formalising the organisation, not enough support from key stakeholders, unmanaged conflicts and others. A good compromise, as stated earlier, will be to form a network or council of key leaders as a core group to lead the process of forming the formal organisation while themselves being a recognised group. There is less risk of failure in this approach than to force a formal organisation to exist.

In this project networking also means that NFOs will link to plan and implement regional level initiatives to assist national and primary FFOs. NFO leaders must appreciate that the RFO is theirs, and it cannot be of much benefit to its members unless they put effort into making it work. CRFM will facilitate but should not lead.

Outward, RFO, networking orientation may be easier for mature NFOs and ones that are newly formed with the network/council structure described above. Mature NFOs will have the stability to be confident in seeking links with other locations. A new national FFO network or council can see the RFO simply as a transboundary extension of itself. However, an intermediate group may be too involved in addressing its internal dynamics to have the extra capacity for simultaneously reaching outward. Capacity for networking must be assessed.

7.3 Regional FFO network

The national consultations should confirm support for forming the RFO. However, NFOs still need to critically examine their readiness to network, and to be realistic about the pros and cons. They may want to determine the level of their involvement. It is better to operate well within capacity than to struggle due to over ambition.

Several options exist for the RFO network structure. Its performance may partly depend upon configuration. A network structure can also generate an organisational climate such that loose networks may seem casual, but denser or closely knit ones seem formal. Over a large geographic area like the Caribbean choices have to be made about more or less centralised structures. Three main options are discussed below, but others exist. A number of the points raised were considered by fisher folk at previous meetings, but should be revisited now.

All three examples are entirely fictitious and not meant to suggest which places should be in the RFO network. The lines (or ties) joining the countries and hence their NFOs (the nodes) represent many possible relations ranging from information exchange, to finance to actual collaboration on some activity. Their main

purpose in these diagrams is to illustrate patterns in connections.

7.3.1 Centralised hub

The network structure below is a centralised hub in which there is a single, easily identified, central node from which most relationships emanate, and no places on the periphery are connected to each other by links.
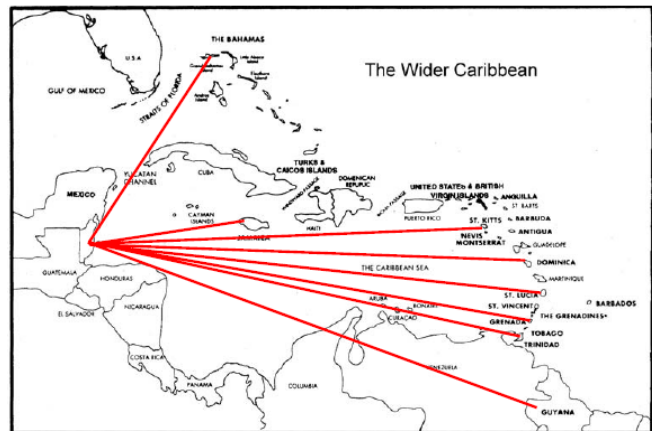
Some advantages

- Clear network leadership and 'headquarters'
- Can build critical mass of capacity in one place
- Can be more efficient and effective for operations
- May delegate responsibility to other nodes
- Accountability is made easier by centralisation
- May be taken "more seriously" as a RFO structure

Some disadvantages

- Concentration of power in hub may cause conflicts
- Whole network vulnerable if centre fails or falters
- May foster dependency on the better endowed hub
- Capacity building at hub may benefit only a few

- May be perceived as most inequitable structure

The centralised hub is the manner in which many organisations such as commercial businesses work when they have subsidiaries or branch offices. The structure of the CRFM and CARICOM is like that. It is a familiar structure and the hub responsibility can be allocated in rotation to different members over time.

7.3.2   Open network

The open network below is, in contrast, very much de-centralised. Each node is somewhat independent and there is no clearly identified network 'headquarters'. The nodes are only loosely and perhaps temporarily connected to each other for doing specific activities.

Some advantages

- Each NFO is encouraged to become self-reliant
- Failure of a node may not affect the entire network
- Can be equitable with shared leadership, benefits
- Tasks can be delegated based on NFO strengths
- Requires less continuous effort for coordination
- Capacity can be spread amongst the RFO nodes
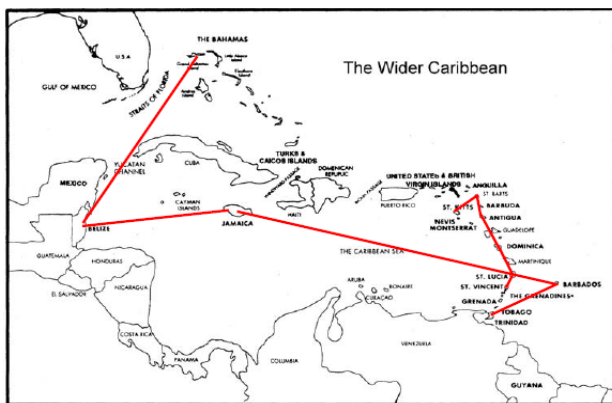
Some disadvantages

- Capacity may become spread to thinly to be useful
- Can be too diffuse to plan well and reach decisions
- RFO leadership may be more difficult to develop
- NFOs may be less inclined to sustain the network
- Effective communication may be more challenging
- Unable to present a 'face' to external stakeholders

The open network may be favoured by strong NFOs that are confident about their success and that demand independence while agreeing to cooperate. Risky start.

7.3.3   Multi-cluster

The multi-cluster is a hybrid of the previous networks. It is a series of hubs that are joined to each other. Lead nodes are sub-regional, with member NFOs nearby.
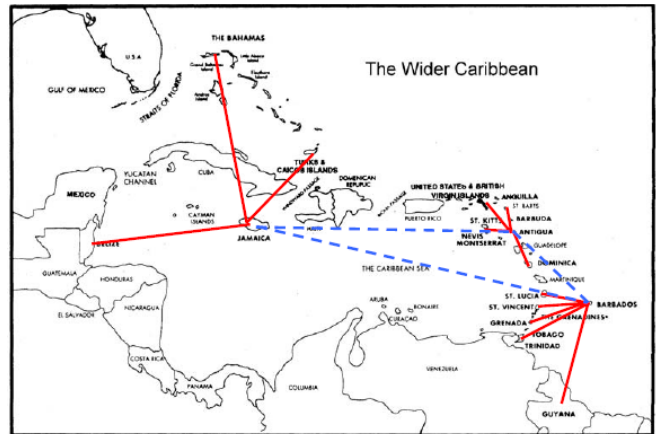
Some advantages

- NFOs that are neighbours can form strong clusters
- Clusters can be sized to suit available hub capacity
- A small number of hubs is easy to coordinate
- A hub can be designated leader by period or task

- Familiar structure used for large companies
- Failure of a cluster may not destroy the network

Some disadvantages

- Hub failure can still affect several NFO nodes
- Sub-regional NFO dependency on hub may arise
- Capacity has to be built in several locations
- Some activities cannot be done sub-regionally
- Disparity in performance of clusters may be issue
- Hubs need to be able to work together to be RFO

This is a combination of the good and bad from both previous structures, but overall is more robust than either. Vulnerability is reduced if clusters are thought of as being substitutable units in the overall RFO network.

7.4   RFO operations

Operations will depend a bit upon the network structure selected. However some general considerations apply no matter which is chosen. Most considerations are the same as for the NFOs and primary FFOs described previously, but scaled up. Because of scale the RFO needs stronger leadership and better communication. It is important that the NFOs become proficient in email and use of the internet if the RFO is to operate well.

The RFO will most likely be a formal association with a constitution, executive and rules. The provisions of the CSME should be examined to see what conditions may apply to constrain or enable this pioneering initiative. If the RFO is going to play a role in regional governance and development it must have its own plan (not just the collection of NFO plans) and identify representatives or leaders for various components. The RFO may quickly fall apart if people are not kept involved and doing what interests them most.

The needs assessment report contains valuable information on the enabling environment and networking required for the RFO.

7.5   International linkages

Although the project focuses on a regional network the participants should not overlook the development of international linkages with other FFOs and the donors. An appendix of organisations and internet addresses is provided for convenience. FFO organisers and leaders should check out these overseas organisations and see what can be learnt from them in setting up NFOs and the RFO. There is no reason to re-invent wheels and every reason to improve on the ideas of others.

8.   Conclusion

There are many challenges to successfully forming and sustaining FFOs anywhere in the world. The Caribbean presents additional problems due to limited capacities and the difficulties of scaling up organisations over a large and diverse geographic area. This briefing note is intended to provide basic pointers on how to achieve the objective and purpose of the CRFM project. It does not claim to supply all of the answers, but it suggests where many can be found. However, ultimately, the choice is up to fisher folk to chart their way ahead.

Other stakeholders and parties interested in this vital process of development can assist by mapping ways in which success can be achieved, and by facilitating the process of achieving success without controlling it as well. There will be a lot of learning by doing. Both good and bad experiences need to become embedded into institutional memory so that fisher folk organisations and their partners can learn and adapt together to build better and more resilient fisheries institutions.

9.   References and reading

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Appendix: Fisher folk organisation web sites

Organisation name and Internet address (URL)
National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations http://www.nffo.org.uk/
Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation http://www.kfo.ie/
Scottish Fishermen's Organisation http://www.scottishfishermen.co.uk/
Belize Fishermen Cooperative Association Ltd http://www.bfca.bz/
Acadian Fishermen's Co-op Association Ltd. http://www.acadianfishcoop.com/
International Co-operative Fisheries Organisation http://www.ica.coop/icfo/index.html

Organisation name and Internet address (URL)
Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association http://www.ccchfa.org/pages/2/
International Collective in Support of Fishworkers http://www.icsf.net/icsf2006/jspFiles/icsfMain/
Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association http://www.gfwa.org/
Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters http://www.ccpfh-ccpp.org/
Maritime Fishermen's Union http://www.mfu-upm.com/english/index.cfm
Westport Fishermen's Association http://www.westportriver.org/
Scottish Fishermen's Federation http://www.sff.co.uk/
Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association, Inc. http://www.ctflyfish.org/index.php
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations http://www.pcffa.org/
Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association http://www.mssa.net/
Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association http://www.gcifa.ns.ca/

Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat
Princess Margaret Drive, P.O. Box 642, Belize City, Belize
Telephone: 501-223-4443/44/45, Fax: 501-223-4446
Email: crfm@btl.net
Web Page: www.caricom-fisheries.com

and

3rd Floor Corea's Building
Halifax Street, Kingstown
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Telephone: 784-457-3474, Fax: 784-457-3475
Email: cfusvg@vincysurf.com

Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat
Princess Margaret Drive, P.O. Box 642, Belize City, Belize
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