

## The way forward

The fisheries chain is a diverse, complex, dynamic 'human-in nature' system. Using conventional command and control approaches, it is predominantly unmanageable. An emerging concept is that fisheries systems have to be approached differently. Four essentials for this concept are:

- A perspective for thinking through the links in problem solving and creating the opportunities required.
- Principles and ethics to enable the addressing of hard choices to contribute rationality, performance, responsiveness and to assure quality.
- Learning mechanisms that address the adaptive dynamic nature of the challenge and provide continuous corrective quality assurance.
- Need to be inclusive and responsive to all stakeholders.



## In conclusion

Changing from the present systems to interactive governance systems will be a long-term effort with many challenges. Currently, management decisions for fisheries are based on knowledge that is the outcome of research. However, as there is insufficient or no input from stakeholders or their representatives, such non-interactive governance is failing to address the need to agree and implement long-term actions to ensure sustainability of fishery resources. Indeed, some stakeholders are questioning the validity or legitimacy of the knowledge on which decisions have been based.

These challenges should not be a deterrent to engaging in the change process to achieve interactive governance, more especially since the approach of interactive governance of fisheries reflects the vision expressed in the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations in 2000.

The MDGs of special significance for fisheries are those for:

- environmental sustainability
- eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, and
- developing a global partnership for development



## The Fisheries Governance Network

The Fisheries Governance Network came into being in 2001 when the European Commission invited some twenty specialists in different aspects of fisheries and aquaculture to meet and discuss the concept of fisheries governance. The specialists were from Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and South Pacific. Their insights and ideas were developed over a series of meetings, hosted by the Centre for Maritime Research (MARE) in Amsterdam, and have been encapsulated in a new workbook on interactive governance

in fisheries, *Fisheries Governance, a guide to better practice*, which is published by the Amsterdam University Press. This leaflet is an introduction to the guide.

### The Steering Committee of FISHGOVNET comprises:

- Jan Kooiman, Erasmus University, Netherlands (Chair)
- Maarten Bavinck, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands (Secretary)
- Ratana Chuenpagdee, Coastal Development Centre (CDC), Thailand
- Serge Collet, Consorzio Mediterraneo, Italy
- Poul Degnbol, Institute for Fisheries Management and Coastal Community Development (IFM), Denmark
- Mamadou Diallo, Institut Senegalais de Recherches Agricoles (ISRA), Senegal
- Katia Frangoudes, OIKOS Environnement-Ressources, France
- Peter van der Heijden, International Agricultural Centre (IAC), The Netherlands
- Svein Jentoft, University of Tromsø, Norway
- Derek Johnson, Centre for Maritime Research (MARE), The Netherlands
- Michel Kulbicki, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), New Caledonia
- Robin Mahon, University of the West Indies, Barbados
- Jose Pascual, Universidad La Laguna, Spain
- Laura Piriz, National Board of Fisheries, Sweden
- Roger Pullin, Manx Wildlife Trust, Isle of Man
- Rashid Sumaila, World Fish Centre, Canada
- Chandrika Sharma, International Collective for the Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), India
- Andy Thorpe, University of Portsmouth, Great Britain
- Juan Luis Suarez de Vivero, Universidad de Sevilla, Spain
- Annabelle Cruz-Trinidad, Pacific Rim Innovation and Management Exponents (PRIMEX), Philippines
- Joeli Veitayaki, University of the South Pacific, Fiji
- Stella Williams, Obafemi Awalowo University, Nigeria

### Learning more about Fisheries governance

The Fisheries Governance Network website provides a rich source of experiences, practices and opinions for those interested in fisheries governance. Contributors include all manner of stakeholders, and the Fisheries Governance Network invites contributions from those wishing to share their views and experiences:

[fishgovnet@marecentre.nl](mailto:fishgovnet@marecentre.nl)

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# Fisheries governance – pulling together for better practice

## Introduction

The current global crisis in fisheries and the ups and downs of aquaculture are of grave concern to everyone: policymakers, administrators, scientists, fishers and other stakeholders.

The main concerns are clear:

- Ecosystem health
- Livelihoods and employment
- Social justice
- Food security and food safety

There is urgent need for a new approach to perceiving and giving meaning to fisheries and aquaculture processes in order to ensure sustainability. Current governance practices need to be strengthened to make a practical and lasting difference.

Governance, as opposed to government, is the process by which economic and social matters are managed, and the capacity of the institutions to manage them fairly, rationally and predictably. Governance is about institutional performance and the relationship between state, market and society.

'Interactive Governance' may be defined as a process that comprises all of the interactions amongst stakeholders involved in addressing problems and creating opportunities. However, to be accepted by all stakeholders, and to be effective, governance needs to be:

- Transparent
- Equitable
- Legitimate
- Consistent

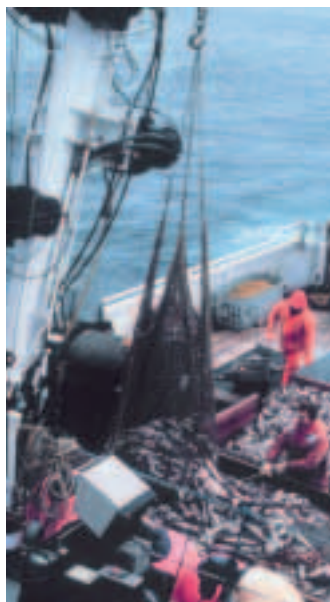
Any new approach to governance should also be monitored and its impact assessed as part of the process.





## The challenges and concerns facing fisheries and aquaculture

Capture fisheries are generally recognised as being in crisis. Meanwhile aquaculture development is often poorly planned. Both capture fisheries and aquaculture face difficult challenges that must be met. Interactive governance offers the best process for achieving sustainable production.



### Challenges in capture fisheries

The most visible sign of crisis in capture fisheries is levelling of the total world catch since the 1990s, and the declining catches of individual fishers. Other symptoms are:

- Overexploitation, demonstrated by decline of aquatic biomass and reduction in catches per unit of effort (CPUE).
- The number of people employed fishing is still increasing, particularly in developing countries.
- Reduction in fishing capacity, though generally agreed, is proving difficult to achieve.
- There are many conflicts between small and large-scale fishers.
- Increase in international trade in fish products, leading to greater choice for consumers but further depletion of stocks.

A severe lack of information on the functioning of the fish chain, and consequently decisions are often based on incomplete information.

### Challenges in aquaculture

Aquaculture is often seen as the panacea for the reducing capacity of capture fisheries to meet increasing demand of fish products. However, in many situations aquacultural development is itself raising difficult questions.

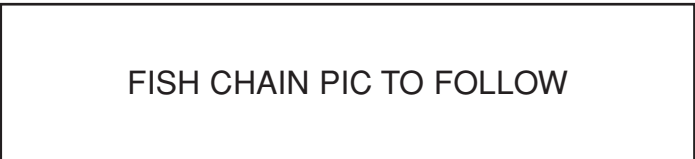
- How to plan aquaculture and reconcile it with other societal interests, including capture fisheries.
- Deciding what should be farmed and where it should be farmed.
- How employment benefits for the rural population can be maximised.
- How aquaculture's negative impacts on the ecosystem may be controlled.

Such questions should be seen in the context of The Fish Chain.



## The Fish Chain

Capture fisheries and aquaculture may be seen as parts of a chain. But, the fish chain is more diverse, complex and dynamic than simple chain links since every link and element of the fish chain is not only interconnected but differs in scale. It is also adaptive and reflects a large number of stakeholders.



Too often in the past, the links in the fish chain have been viewed in isolation, and many stakeholders have not been involved in governance, though they have an influence on it.

There are many diverse stakeholders in the fish chain, and they have varying levels of power and influence. In addition, the resource itself is unpredictable. The challenge of interactive governance is therefore to recognise and accommodate these characteristics with management that is adaptive.

### Hard choices

Fisheries governance is multidimensional and has to address concerns, principles and goals that are laudable but frequently in conflict. Resource conservation, securing jobs in the fishery, sustaining communities, feeding the poor and increasing export earnings are all worthy objectives but not easily reconciled. They confront decision makers with dilemmas and hard choices, which are always controversial and politically painful. Typical hard choices in fisheries are:

- Small-scale vs large-scale fisheries?
- Short-term vs long-term development?
- Innovation vs precaution?
- Domestic vs foreign markets?
- Centralization vs decentralization?
- Aquaculture development vs fisheries rehabilitation?

What makes these choices hard is that decisions benefit stakeholders preferentially. Thus, the governance of fisheries demands a principled debate on values. Too often the underlying values are assumed and therefore are not brought into the open to be debated rationally and democratically.



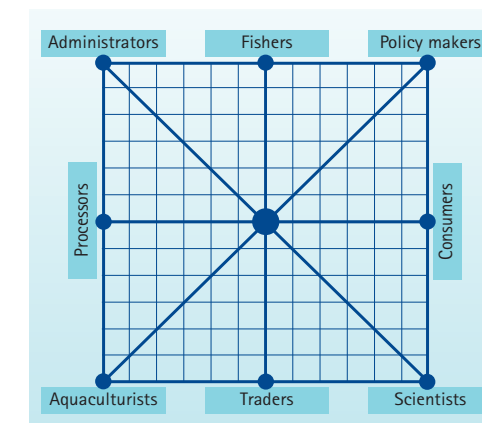
## Achieving interactive governance

‘Governance is the whole of interactions taken to solve societal problems and create societal opportunities’



Conventionally, governance has been viewed as the task of governments. But governments are not the only actors capable of addressing societal problems and opportunities. People in a variety of roles and circumstances in every society are engaged in shaping societal futures, and it is the interactions between all the actors that determine outcomes.

The interactions among stakeholders in fisheries and aquaculture to achieve good governance can be represented as a web, with all points connected and governance at its centre.



Inclusiveness lies at the heart of interactive governance, so governance is only effective when all actors are equally represented and are meaningfully engaged in positive interactions. Open dialogue, negotiation, and transparency reduce conflict, strengthen collaboration and promote the sharing of responsibility and power.

No single actor, public or private, has all the knowledge and information required to solve diverse, complex and dynamic problems. But together, actors may well have the resources and capability to fulfil governing tasks. Mutual interactive learning, unilateral and multilateral, will be an additional outcome.

Thus, interactive governance must allow for pooling of specialised competencies, and also for mutual interactive learning throughout the decision-making process. An understanding of learning opportunities prevailing within the fisheries must start from the analysis of fisheries as a system of chains. It is within these chains that social interaction occurs and relationships of exchange exist, and are built to the benefit of all stakeholders.





# Fisheries governance – a guide to better practice

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