Coming Together to Manage Fisheries

A Field Guide to Stakeholder Analysis

BOBP
For Fisheries Management
BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAMME

FAO

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Field Guide

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Foreword

One of the tests of genuine expertise is the ability to simplify complex matters. This little step-by-step field guide on stakeholder analysis has certainly passed the test. Easy to read, attractively illustrated, it can be read through at one sitting. It is aimed at field practitioners in stakeholder analysis, but will also be found useful by policy-makers and decision-makers.

Stakeholder analysis is a tool for participatory development, for crisis resolution, for consensus building, for bridging viewpoints. It can turn conflict into consensus and strengthen community bonds. I believe it isn't just essential for fisheries management, it is indispensable. Fisheries management can't be achieved by either fiat or force; it is a process of listening, understanding, negotiation, persuasion and facilitation. It is slow but steady, sure and systematic.

Rich and varied experience goes into this booklet. During its Third Phase (1994-1999, extended till date), BOBP's mandate was fisheries management. It tackled a gamut of fisheries management tasks in the seven member-countries in co-operation with governments and other agencies. Ornamental fisheries management in Sri Lanka; reef resources management in the Maldives; management of the employment-intensive but resource-damaging set bagnet and push net fisheries in Bangladesh; community-based resource management in Thailand; marine parks management in Malaysia; study of traditional fisheries management in Indonesia; conflict resolution between fishers in Tamil Nadu, India; shrimp fisheries management in Andhra Pradesh, India. Rarely has a fisheries agency applied the tool of stakeholder analysis to such a diversity of management tasks.

The outcomes have been rewarding. We have sought to share them with you through this little booklet. Whatever your development or management task, we hope you find it useful. Good luck!

Yugraj Singh Yadava
Interim IGO Coordinator

Contents

Welcome to the field guide. And, make sure you read this section before delving further into the guide!

This field guide for practitioners is derived from the experiences of the Bay of Bengal Programme for Fisheries Management, or the BOBP as the programme came to be known, in understanding and bringing together *stakeholders*, all those involved in or having influence and impact on particular fisheries, in order to evolve more participatory approaches to managing fisheries.

The BOBP is a regional effort of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. It came into being in 1979 for enabling and facilitating the development and management of small-scale fisheries in the seven countries around the Bay of Bengal, namely Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

While fisheries management deals with the various techniques and measures used to manage fisheries in a sustainable manner, the stakeholder approach described in this guide *deals more with organizing and bringing people, the stakeholders, together in order to be able to better practice the management of fisheries*. As such it is more an approach to managing those involved in fisheries than managing the fisheries.

Whom is this guide intended for?

This book intends to provide a "travel guide" for all those concerned with conservation and management of natural resources and in particular, fisheries and other aquatic resources and who want to facilitate and enable people to better understand their resources and come together to manage them in a sustainable manner.

For example, the guide can be of use to any of the following:

- Extension and technical staff of fishery agencies, such as ministries and departments of fisheries;
- Members of civil society and non-governmental organisations working with and for fishers and their communities and those concerned about conservation and management of the environment and natural resources;
- Members of fisher cooperatives and associations who want to better manage their fisheries, ensuring profitability and sustainability of their livelihoods;
- Members of organisations and individuals involved in working with communities for their development and in helping them resolve conflicts; and,
- Just about anyone interested in enabling and facilitating people and communities to better manage and care for the environment and resources they depend on.

What exactly (and briefly) is the stakeholder approach to managing fisheries?

Managing fisheries is traditionally something that ministries and departments of fisheries do. Fisheries scientists and economists study the fisheries and its exploitation and determine (scientifically) what management measures should be used. The governments issue policies, rules and regulations and enact necessary legislation and fishery agencies enforce compliance.

Unfortunately, things are not as easy as they seem. Scientists and economists often have difficulty understanding the complexity of fisheries and of communities that fish them. This makes suggesting management measures and predicting their outcomes difficult and often unreliable. Fishers do not like to follow rules and regulations unless they understand them and it helps them achieve their goals. Enforcing compliance is also expensive. Worse, different groups involved in fisheries often

perceive the problems (and therefore the solutions to the problems) very differently. Given these peculiarities it is not very surprising that there are very few "successful" examples of managing fisheries. The crisis is not so much in coming up with this or that fishery management method but rather to evolve approaches, which bring concerned people into the process of management and enable them to take ownership of the process and make a success of it.

The stakeholder approach tries to overcome some of these problems.

What does that mean in practice?

Stakeholder groups concerned with a fishery or an area, such as fishers of different types, traders, money lenders, wholesalers, retailers, consumers, government, fishery agencies and civil society are encouraged to come together to identify and agree on problems facing them and the fishery from various points of view. With an agreement on the problems the stakeholders are facilitated to work together to come up with mutually acceptable (and beneficial) and informed solution options and management plans, which they as a group are empowered to collectively implement, monitor and enforce.

What exactly can this guide help you to do?

The guide:
- Enables the reader to understand the nature of problems faced in managing small-scale fisheries and proposes stakeholder approaches that may overcome the problems;
- Defines what a stakeholder is, and proposes methods of identifying stakeholders of a fishery;
- Suggests methods of undertaking stakeholder analyses to better understand stakeholders, their needs and aspirations;
- Suggests methods of undertaking problem analyses from the points of view of the different stakeholders;

- Suggests, based on the stakeholder analyses, the ways and means of bringing stakeholders to the table to take the management process forward;
- Broadly proposes the way forward, including stakeholders agreeing on problems, coming up with and agreeing on mutually acceptable and informed options and management plans, and working together to implement, monitor and enforce actions to achieve what is planned for;
- Raises issues and concerns that may confront such stakeholder approaches to fisheries management.

In other words, the guide shares with you BOBP's actual experience and learning during its third phase taking you step by step through a creative problem solving process, suggesting approaches and methods and providing information and some new tools and a roadmap to existing tools. While there is a logical sequence followed in presenting the various steps in the process, the real world is rarely so accommodating and the user of the guide has to be creative and cautious in its use, adapting and evolving steps and their sequence to fit the reality on the ground.

And, what it cannot help you to do.

The guide does not:

- Provide information on or methods and tools used by fishery scientists and fishery economists to manage fisheries; instead it's focus is on bringing stakeholders into the process of management and getting them to participate and take ownership of the process;
- Provide information on commonly used participatory appraisal and learning tools used in stakeholder analysis, except specifying what the analyses seek to uncover and how; clear roadmaps are provided to users to help them find these tools elsewhere;
- Provide information and skills on mediation of negotiations and conflict resolution but does provide an overview and roadmaps to the user who is interested in taking the process forward.

Fish, Fishers, Fishing & Managing Fisheries: The Nature of the Problem

There seems to be a crisis in capture fisheries the world over. The demand for fish is increasing. More people want to eat fish and more of it. And then, there are other non-food demands for fish, such as to produce fishmeal for poultry and aquaculture feed. But fishers all over the world are having difficulty meeting the demand because catches are reducing, sometimes despite increasing efforts. With the awareness of the problems growing, fishers, fishery agencies, governments and consumers are increasingly concerned whether the sea, rivers and other water bodies will be able to meet the demand for fish in the future. Which brings us to the topic of 'managing fisheries'.

Let us think this idea through:

- Fish (and for that matter, all living aquatic resources) is a natural resource, which grows, reproduces and dies;

- Fishers capture fish;

- If fishers catch fish faster and in larger quantities than the fish can grow and reproduce, then the stock of fish is affected and, therefore the catch;

- As fish grow scarce the demand for them pushes up the price people are willing to pay for them and this gives fishers an incentive to catch fish even though they are more expensive to catch because of their scarcity;

- And that makes matters worse!

The answer to this problem is to be rational and to ensure that fishers only catch so much of a stock of fish to ensure the sustainability of the stock. Of course, this is easier said than done. And there is more to it. Fish stocks are not just affected by acts

of irresponsible capture. The quality of the environment, which in several coastal areas is heavily polluted by human activities on and off shore, affects the very habitat of the fish. Destructive fishing methods like using explosives, poisons and fishing gear that are not very selective and either pick up juvenile fish before they have an opportunity to mature and reproduce all affect fish stocks and their availability.

So, the reason why fish stocks are in trouble and why there is an urgent need for management is because people (and fishers) do a variety of things to fish and the environments that they live in, all of which are bad for the fish! Managing fisheries is not so much about managing fish, which left alone seem to do just fine; it is about managing the way people and fishers capture fish and affect their environment. This is not to suggest that understanding the biological and economic aspects of fisheries production and evolving methods to better manage fisheries are unimportant. The idea is to reinforce the fact that a good fisheries management plan (in a technical, economic sense) is necessary but not sufficient for its successful implementation, because in the final analysis it is people who need to take decisions and change their behaviour.

Fisheries management is really people management!

Before we concern ourselves with the stakeholder approach to fisheries management and whether it would really make a difference, it would be useful to start at the beginning and reflect on the very nature of the problems confronting fisheries and to ask ourselves what kind of solutions would really make a difference.

Why bother with fisheries management?

Fish is food and for a lot people the major source of their animal protein. Some have traditionally eaten fish and feel deprived when they cannot get enough; others like the taste, and some others are beginning to eat fish instead of other meats for reasons of health. With populations increasing, at alaming rates, the demand for fish is going to increase worldwide. The problem is, after peaking in 1989, marine fish catch in most cases has stabilized and in some has actually declined since then. Then situation in the inland fisheries is no better.

With marine and river fishing in trouble the culture of fish was and is seen as the way around fish shortages. Although the production from growing of fish in controlled conditions in enclosed waters and mariculture, ranching of fish in open waters is growing, the industry is already beset with its own problems. There are concerns about conflicts over land and water access and tenure. The impact of aquaculture on the soil and on water due to the waste products it generates is worrying in spite of the fact that well managed aquaculture can be a self-cleaning process. Disease outbreaks are a continuing threat, aggravated by poor management and increased crowding. In other words, aquaculture may not be the solution that everyone hoped it would be.

When supply cannot cope with demand, prices rise and it is the poor, often traditional consumers of fish, who find fish disappearing from their food baskets.

Fisher populations have not necessarily increased faster than other populations but the rate at which fishing practices have improved and intensified over time is phenomenal. Fishers use more efficient (in fact too efficient) fishing gear in much larger numbers than ever before. Fishing crafts are larger, more sea-worthy, can travel faster and longer and therefore search more efficiently and fish longer. New technologies make finding fish easier. All this 'targeting' of decreasing and stressed fish stocks, in 'open' access waters, is sure recipe for conflict among fishers. And conflicts abound in the fishing world!

The need to provide people with fish as food into the future, to ensure the profitability and sustainability of an enterprise that provides livelihoods to millions of fishers, quite a few of whom are considered poor and marginalized even amongst the poor and to reduce conflict are the major reasons why everyone concerned is talking and worrying about managing fisheries. Something has got to be done! The question is, how?

The Nature of the Problem

Let us pause and look at the issues in small-scale coastal fisheries. Fisher populations increase like most other populations. However, the real issue is that the impact of the

Land

Sea

- Low access to land
- Few alternative livelihood options
- Low savings
- Low access to credit
- Low access to markets
- Low level of organisation

Conflict amongst fishers

Increased fishing effort

Over fishing

Increased fisher population

Reduced catch/ unit effort

Low income, livelihoods vulnerable and at risk

Reduced recrutment

Reduced income

Nexus between fish trade and credit

Low price of fish

Gravid female catch

Juvenile catch

Low access to social services

Low quality of life

Pollution

Silt

Sewage

Habitat destruction
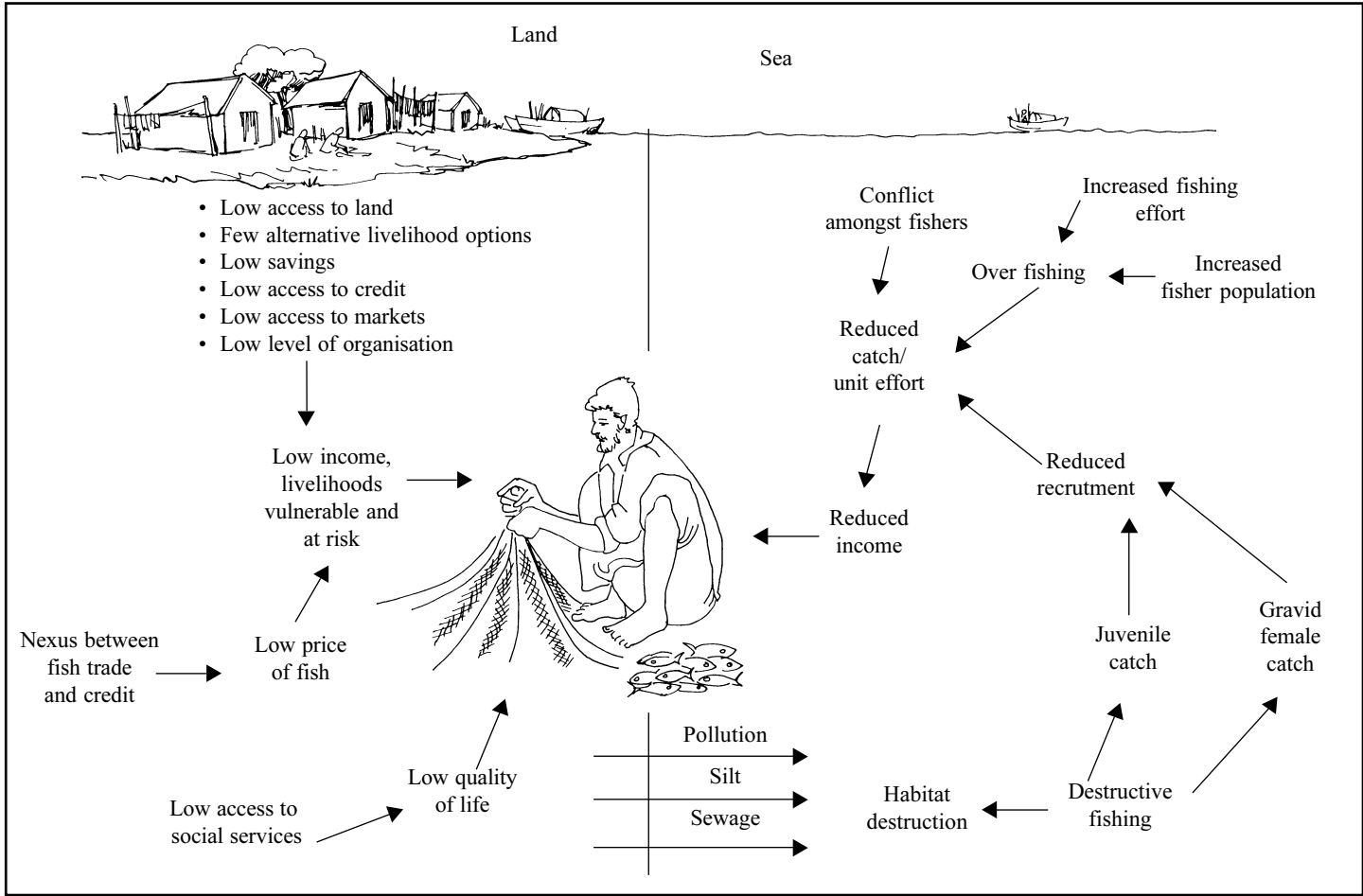
Destructive fishing

Figure 1

increase in fisher populations gets multiplied several times when you consider the accelerating effect of technology: bigger boats, motorization, more efficient fishing gear and of course a lot more gear. All this leads to over fishing, which in turn means reduced catch per unit effort of fishing and therefore reduced incomes.

To make matters worse, pollution from industries and agriculture, and sewage from coastal cities pours into the waters affecting coastal eco-systems and the very habitat of the fish. Fishers, desperate for incomes are tempted to resort to destructive fishing methods like active gear such as trawls and push nets and non-selective, small mesh gear. Driven by customer demands and cultural quirks, fishers target juvenile fish and gravid fish, all of which affect fish stocks and catches.

The scenario on land is no better. Fishers have little access to land or to other livelihood options, making them very dependent of fishing. The nexus between fish marketing and provision of financial credit to fuel the fishery economy guarantees that fishers get low prices for their fish while the market chain enjoys the profits. It also means that fishers have little or no control over either their means of production and the environment they live and depend on or on the markets that determine the profitability of their livelihoods.

Let us try and understand the nature of these problems because they might suggest what the solutions should look like, and whether stakeholder approaches can add value.

First, there are too many categories of people (stakeholders, if you wish) involved in the fishery business (and most seem to have little or no power to influence the process). Each group has its own role to play in the process and each has its own perception of what is happening and what the problems are. Fishing is the business of fishers, but there are several varieties of fishers some of whom may be competing with each other because they are possibly targeting the same fish stocks with different gear or at different locations or even at different periods of the fish lifecycle. Fishing makes no sense unless there is a market for it. Customers of different types, through

Figure 1 tries to visualize the interactions often seen in coastal fisheries in the countries in which the Bay of Bengal Programme worked, and with some variations could represent the situation in most small-scale coastal fisheries. In this particular case the visualization is based on the situation in coastal Bangladesh, particularly along the coasts of Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar districts.

First, there are too many categories of people (stakeholders, if you wish) involved in the fishery business (and most seem to have little or no power to influence the process).

Too Many Players can Muddy the Waters — An Experience from Sri Lanka

The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) of the Government of Sri Lanka and BOBP worked together to try and improve the management of the ornamental fish sector. Sri Lanka has a lucrative trade in exporting ornamental fish from both marine and freshwater habitats. The habitats of ornamental fish are primarily the coral reefs, estuaries and lagoons for the marine species and the rivers for freshwater species.

The ornamental fish sector was found to have a very large number of stakeholders involved in it and influencing and impacting it. For example in the sector were divers, dive operators, buyers, breeders, exporters, transporters and shipping agents.

Given the diversity of the habitats where the ornamental fish are found and the fact that these areas support a variety of different activities, there were a number of stakeholders whose activities impacted on the habitat. They included fishers targeting food-fish, coral miners, producers of lime & cement (from coral), tourist hotels, diving schools and tourist dive operators, glass bottom boat operators, the forestry and agricultural sectors upstream that generate pesticide and fertilizer residues and silt, municipalities generating solid waste and sewage, the shipping sector with its input of oil and ballast water and so on and so forth.

From the government side too there were several ministries and departments that had jurisdiction and regulatory and developmental interests. The agencies involved included theMFOR, the Department of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Development, the National Aquatic Resources Agency, the Department of Coast Conservation, the Ministry of Environment, Transport and Women's Affairs, the Central Environment Authority, the Department of Customs, the Export Development Board, the Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Department of Forest Conservation, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Public Administration, the Marine Pollution Prevention Authority, the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Development Board and several others.

And then there were non-governmental organizations and members of civil society particularly interested in environmental issues. The challenge was to understand the sector and its problems through the perceptions of these players because their actions are driven by their perceptions, interests and agendas. Some of their perceptions differed so dramatically that they refused to even sit together to discuss the issues, leave alone come up with solutions.

their purchasing power, drive demand with their preferences and dislikes. Fishery departments do not fish but they promote, support and regulate fisheries. Various players along the market chain add value, provide services, are often the only source of credit, and even introduce technologies. Then there are groups and agencies with environmental, socio-economic and human rights agendas who fight for or against issues relating to fisheries. It is risky to write them off as mere troublemakers and adversaries as they have voice, can mould public opinion and move the legal system. As members of civil society they have valid and legitimate roles to play. Even amongst government agencies there are several ministries and departments who have legitimate jurisdiction over areas and matters pertaining to fisheries and whose policies affect fisheries.

Looked at through the eyes of these different stakeholders the 'problems' differ and one group's problem may well be another's solution. So whose problem is the 'right' problem? Even one unhappy or dissatisfied group, no matter how small, can sometimes block the process of managing fisheries in spite of the fact that a majority of stakeholders agree to it.

Whose problem, whose solution?

Too often in the past there has been a tendency to see fisheries management as something government agencies do. The agency determined what needed to be done, developed policies, enacted rules and regulations and then spent enormous amounts of time and money to implement the plans and enforce the rules and regulations. Implementation of management plans and enforcing regulations is almost impossible, not to mention prohibitively expensive, unless all the stakeholders agree to the plans and regulations and help in enforcing them. People in general rarely support laws and regulations governing their lives and livelihoods unless they believe in them. And one sure way of giving people ownership of their laws and regulations is to involve them in the process of designing and developing them.

There is obviously a need for an approach to management that can bring people together to agree on problems and solutions and to work collectively to implement and enforce management actions.

Secondly, complexity of ecosystems and social systems makes predicting outcomes of actions very difficult.

Complexity Complicates Management Decisions — An Experience from Bangladesh

The Department of Fisheries (DOF) of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock of the Government of Bangladesh and BOBP worked together to try and improve the management of the estuarine set-bag net (ESBN) fishery. The ESBN fishery in the estuaries of coastal Bangladesh is a very old fishery that basically looks like a large sock suspended between poles in the water, which filters the water of fish, as it is raised by the current of water flowing through it. It provides a livelihood for at least 150 000 fishers (depending on whose statistics one considers credible), which add up to about a million people.

Discussions with stakeholders and studies conducted by DOF and BOBP showed that the ESBN fishery interacted with the off-shore trawl fishery, the mid-shore trammel net fishery, the marine ESBN fishery, the near shore beach seines and the push net fishery in the case of just one of the species it targeted, namely tiger shrimp or *Penaeus Monodon,* and each fishery caught the tiger shrimp at different times of its life cycle. As if this were not complex enough, the ESBN fishery targets a large number of species, with juveniles making up the majority of the catch. Estuarine areas of Bangladesh are vast wetlands with a very complex and fragile ecology. From a purely fisheries point of view the ESBN fishery is definitely destructive because it is not selective, because it targets juveniles and the fishing effort is enormous. However, given the interactive nature of the fisheries, the complexity of the ecosystem and the variety of natural and human impacts on it, it is difficult to pin down the relative impacts and levels of destructiveness and point a finger at the ESBN fishery. Nor does it make sense to deal with one fishery and let the others go on adding to the problem.

The complexity is not just in the waters. On the people side the ESBN fishers were often, though not in all cases, some of the poorest households, who had almost no other livelihood options. The catch from the ESBN was primarily consumed in the immediate hinterlands with some moving into the urban areas. Given the small size of the fish caught, the multiplicity of species and the often long soaking times (that affects freshness and quality), it was mostly consumed by the poor, for whom this constituted a large portion of, if not the only, animal protein of their diet.

One fishery management option would be to reduce the fishing effort and eventually to stop the use of the ESBN. But how does a government go about affecting the livelihoods of a million people when it is difficult to pin down the 'real culprits' in interactive fisheries, when the people involved have no other livelihood options to fall back upon, not even other types of fishing, and when the closure of the fishery or its reduction will affect the already meager animal protein intake of a large number of poor people?

Management of fisheries or anything, for that matter, requires understanding the systems involved well enough that one can predict the impact of actions. In other words, one should be able to say, *if we do this, then that will happen.* Unfortunately, both coastal marine ecosystems and the social ecosystems of the people who fish them are very complex and while we have learnt a lot about them it is still very difficult to surely and with confidence to predict the impacts of particular actions. We lack good data, information and knowledge. Everything is connected to everything else, and any action has delayed and often unpredictable results. It is also difficult to pin down precisely the causes of problems. So it is difficult to come up with nice, clean, universally acceptable solutions to fisheries management problems. And this uncertainty is very problematic because fishing is about livelihood, about ownership and resource user rights. These are politically sensitive issues of bread and butter (or fish curry and rice?) that people guard jealously and are willing to fight over them.

Lastly, solutions to fisheries problems often lie in other sectors.

Lastly, solutions to fisheries and fisheries management problems often lie in sectors, which are beyond the jurisdiction and ability of fishers and fishery agencies. Pollution from agriculture, industries and cities are destroying coastal ecosystems. The sources of these pollutants are diffuse and often far removed from where the impacts are seen. Further, these activities are regulated by government agencies quite different from fisheries, with their own agendas. Worse, sometimes one sector's problem is another sector's solution. For cities, dumping untreated liquid waste into the sea is a cheap way of getting rid of waste and there is no unsightly dump to attract people's ire. For fish and for fishers this is a serious problem. Forest-based industries log trees for profit, but the silt from the unprotected hillsides wash down to the coast smothering marine habitats like coral reefs. Poor customers, desperate for fish, see lower-priced juvenile fish as a way of getting some fish to eat, thus encouraging fishers to target juveniles and causing problems to the fishery. Without these outsiders to the fishery becoming insiders, the problems facing fisheries and fisheries management may never get solved.

The nature of
the problem

The nature of
the solution

- Too many stakeholders
- Different perceptions of problems and
  solutions
- Management only by fishery agencies
  – no ownership by others
- Solutions to fisheries problems often
  in other sectors.

- Mechanism for fisheries management
  that can bring in all the stakeholders
  and empower them to participate in
  management and enforcement

- Marine and social ecosystems
  very complex and difficult to
  predict
- Difficult to come up with nice,
  scientific and universally accept-
  able solutions

- Precautionary approach to
  fisheries management
- Negotiated agreements on
  problems and solutions leading
  to participatory management
  plans that are regularly revised

- Social & political conflicts
- Ownership and user right issues
- Lack of transparency & accountability
  in management process

- Participatory management
- Empowerment of stakeholders
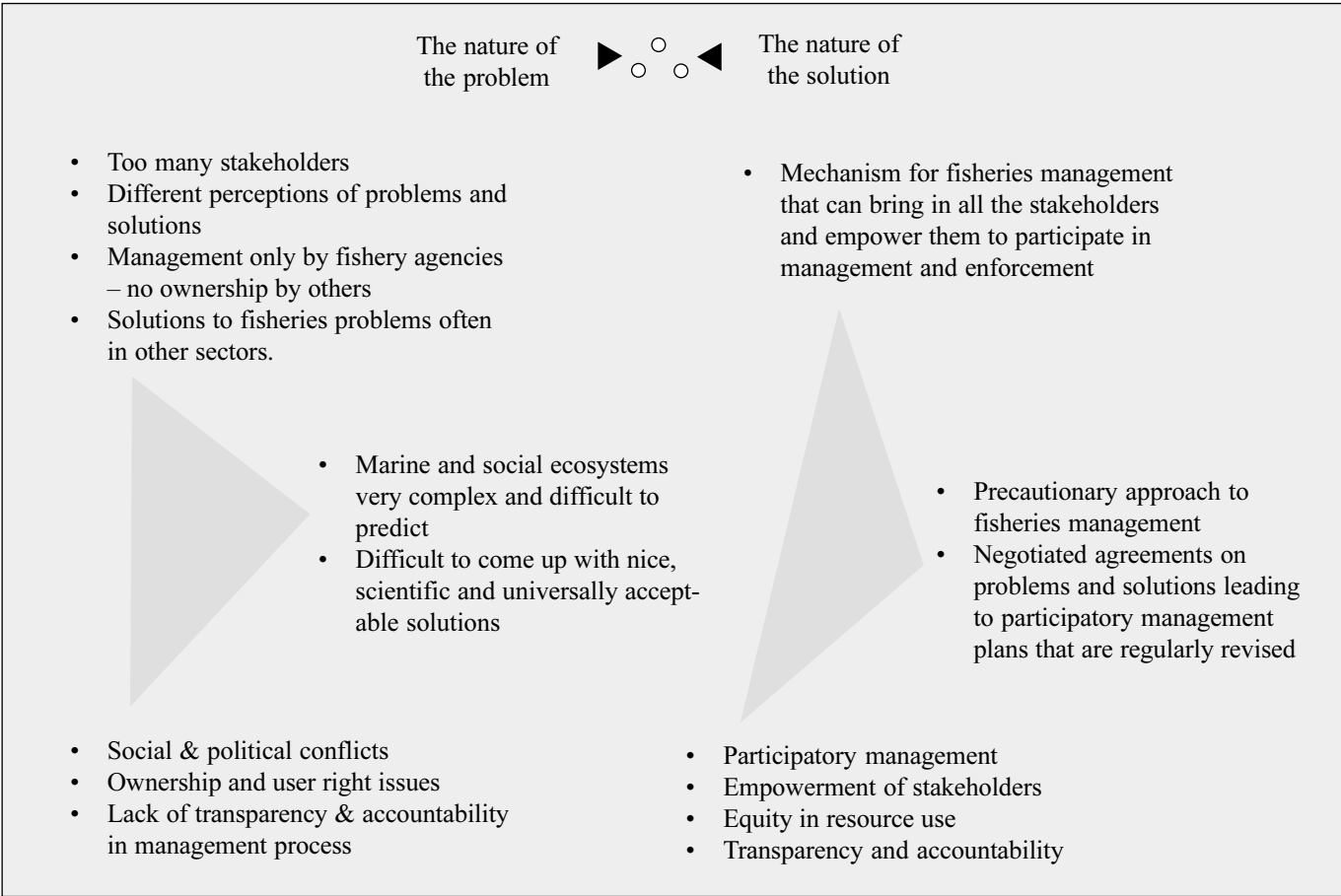- Equity in resource use
- Transparency and accountability

Figure 2

And, therefore the nature of the SOLUTION!

The nature of the problem if inversed should give us an idea of what the approach to the solution should be like. If we consider the above three characteristics then the nature of the approach to solution should at least have the following characteristics:

- The mechanism or approach to fisheries management should be able to bring together all the stakeholders and empower them to participate in developing, implementing, monitoring and enforcing management plans and actions.

- Given the uncertainty, there is a need to take the 'precautionary approach' to fisheries management, erring on the side of caution.

- With differing perceptions and agendas there is a need to work towards negotiated agreements amongst stakeholders on problems and solution options leading to participatory management plans that are revised periodically.

- The management of fisheries has to be participatory, with stakeholders being empowered by law to participate and the process should be both transparent and accountable.

- The over-riding criteria of efforts to manage fisheries should be to work towards equity and justice in the use of resources.

The nature of the problem can help us in evolving approaches that can enable and facilitate improved management of fisheries. BOBP's experience during its third phase, drawn from pilot exercises in seven countries, suggests that a stakeholder approach to fisheries management has the basic ingredients that can address the very nature of the small-scale fisheries and fisheries management problems and may go a long way in addressing them.

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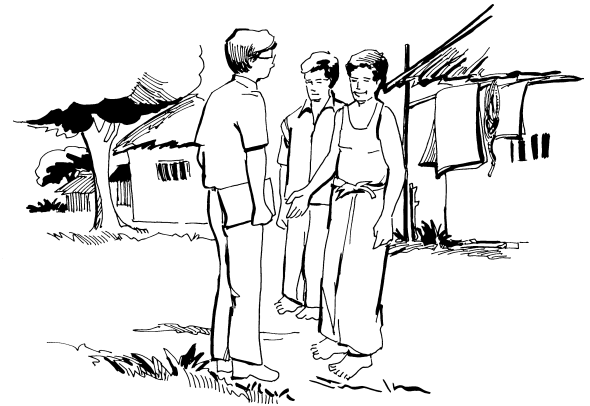
The Nature of the Solution: An Overview of the Stakeholder Approach to Fisheries Management

Does the stakeholder approach to fisheries management have the special characteristics necessary to address the peculiar nature of the problems encountered in small-scale fisheries? The experience of BOBP in pilot exercises undertaken in its seven member-countries suggests that it does. Rather than take us at our word let the guide take you on a quick journey through the stakeholder management process and let you decide whether it actually does.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. The pilot exercises in fisheries management facilitated by BOBP did not have either the time or the resources to take the process through all its paces to its logical end, that is, some form of participatory fisheries management. Stakeholders were identified and came together. Problems were analyzed and agreed to. Solution options were discussed and, in some cases, broad agreement was reached on what should be done. Stakeholders were convinced that the only way forward was to work together. And that was where BOBP's involvement ceased, with the ending of the stakeholder programme in December 1999. Most of the member-countries, however, were committed to moving forward on their own because they had caught a glimpse of what the approach was capable of. More importantly, in spite of the fact that the stakeholder approach seemed difficult and time consuming and in spite of the fact that it would require additional resources, most people involved were convinced that the one reason to try the approach was that there may not be a better and practical alternative to coming together to manage fisheries.

A word of caution!

What does this entail for you, the reader? A little more than half the stakeholder management process written about in this guide is based on 'ground-truthed' experience. The rest is careful (and conservative) conjecture and extrapolation. It is

not all imagination because parallels for what is recommended in this guide exist and are successfully practiced in other fields of endeavor. And the experience, particularly the learning that emerged from the pilot exercises suggests that what has been proposed is well within the realm of possibility. So, in other words, you, the readers, are being asked to proceed with caution, but with faith, in the hope that you will be able to validate and ratify the conjecture and extrapolation with your work, and complete what BOBP set out to do.

Let us begin the journey at the very beginning.

Who is a stakeholder?

A stakeholder is broadly defined as anyone who is either involved in the overall process of a fishery or one who can either influence the behavior of the fishery or is involved in processes that have impacts on the fishery.

Very briefly, in the stakeholder approach to fisheries management, stakeholder groups concerned with a fishery or an area, such as fishers of different types, traders, money lenders, wholesalers, retailers, consumers, government, fishery agencies and civil society are encouraged to come together to identify and agree on problems facing them and the fishery from various points of view. With an agreement on the problems the stakeholders are facilitated to work together to come up with mutually acceptable (and beneficial) and informed solution options and management plans, which they as a group are empowered to collectively implement, monitor and enforce.

Let us look at the process, step by step. The figure overleaf shows eleven steps in the stakeholder management process. While these are shown as linear, sequential activities, as in most complex social activities, things do often happen differently, in different orders and sometimes in parallel. And this is normal, or as normal as the society is. The entire process can be described from the point of view of the facilitators of the process, who can be either one of the stakeholders (if the others do not mind) or an independent (and perhaps therefore more credible) group.
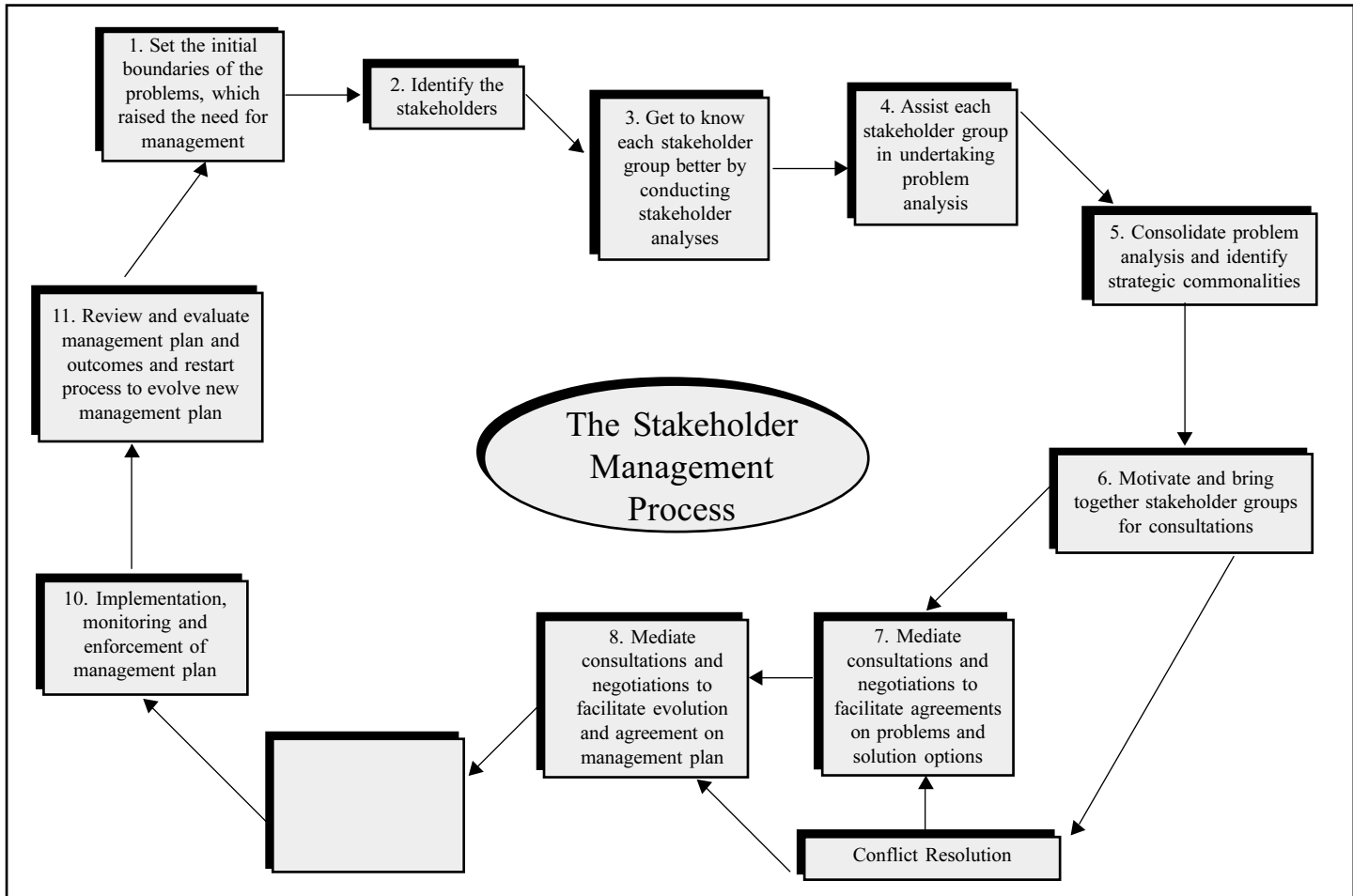
1. Set the initial boundaries of the problems, which raised the need for management

2. Identify the stakeholders

3. Get to know each stakeholder group better by conducting stakeholder analyses

4. Assist each stakeholder group in undertaking problem analysis

5. Consolidate problem analysis and identify strategic commonalities

6. Motivate and bring together stakeholder groups for consultations

7. Mediate consultations and negotiations to facilitate agreements on problems and solution options

8. Mediate consultations and negotiations to facilitate evolution and agreement on management plan

10. Implementation, monitoring and enforcement of management plan

11. Review and evaluate management plan and outcomes and restart process to evolve new management plan

The Stakeholder Management Process

Conflict Resolution

Figure 3

Step 1: Set the initial boundaries of the problem(s), which raised the need for management

In Bangladesh the pilot exercise focused on the estuarine set-bag net (ESBN) fishery, which is practiced all along the coast. In the Maldives the reefs and the resources that used them as a habitat were the focus. In Thailand, all the fisheries functioning in the Phang Nga Bay were the focus.

The first step is to find the entry point into the process. Something must have happened that either was unacceptable or was at least a matter of concern. There has to be a reason to manage anything. For example, in Bangladesh the export of tiger shrimp earns valuable foreign exchange. BOBP's resource management studies showed that seven different fisheries targeted tiger shrimp at different times of its life cycle and several of these fisheries were destructive. The study also showed that some of the fisheries had effects on other commercial fisheries, often of a detrimental nature. Finally, the study showed that a very large number of people were involved in some of these fisheries. The sustainability of the tiger shrimp export was the key concern that led to thinking about managing the ESBN fishery.

There has to be a reason to manage anything

There is a need to broadly define the boundaries of the problem, which needs to be managed as this gives direction and focus to the stakeholder management process. This could be geographic in nature, or even be related to a particular group or community of fishers. But, in almost all cases the boundaries of a fisheries management exercise is dictated by the concerned fisheries to be managed. If the geographic area or the fishing grounds of a particular group of fishers coincides with the boundaries of the concerned fisheries it will lend itself to the approach. It is useful to remember that as the process of stakeholder management unfolds the boundaries may have to be revisited and redrawn.

Step 2. Identify the stakeholders

The next step is to identify the stakeholders, all those involved in the fishery, or the problem whose boundaries have been determined. This should include all those

involved in catching, selling and consuming, including those who make these activities possible. It should also include those who influence or somehow have an impact on the fishery, either positively or negatively. This is not as difficult as it sounds. By tracking the activities and impacts and talking with the persons involved, a good listing is possible.

As the process evolves, those missed out will emerge and can be included. One nice thing about identifying stakeholders is that it is almost impossible to ignore a stakeholder who is either an important player or has considerable impact on the process because they will insist on being included. What we need to worry about is to ensure that the less powerful and less articulate stakeholders are also included.

Step 3. Get to know each stakeholder group better by conducting stakeholder analysis

Having identified the stakeholders it is necessary to get to know them better, to understand what they do and don't and why. Perhaps the most important aspect of stakeholder analysis is to determine how the stakeholders see, perceive and give meaning to their problems and solution options. A lot of analysis is problem-driven and an often-ignored aspect is to understand people's dreams and aspirations, as these are powerful driving forces that will more often than not bring people together than their differences and problems will. Stakeholder analysis has to be done one stakeholder group at a time and the findings consolidated for further action. Stakeholder analysis is undertaken using a variety of well established and some newer and lesser known participatory appraisal and learning tools.

Step 4. Assist each stakeholder group in undertaking problem analysis

Problem analysis is a carryover from the previous step but given special importance because it plays a critical part and lays the foundation for the rest of the stakeholder management process. In problem analysis each stakeholder group is helped to separate symptoms from problems and to then determine the causes of the problems, evolving in the process a problem tree, using 'if-then' logic, as they perceive them. It

..it is almost impossible to ignore a stakeholder who is either an important player or has considerable impact on the process because they will insist on being included. What we need to worry about is to ensure that the less powerful and less articulate stakeholders are also included.

is also very important at this stage to understand the group's aspirations and dreams as these often articulate how they give meaning to the problems.

Step 5. Consolidate problem analyses and identify strategic commonalities &

### Step 6. Motivate and bring together stakeholder groups for consultations

People do not come together unless they have a very good reason or reasons to do so. Coming together implies compromise, and some win and some loose in the process. Different groups have different levels of power and the more and less powerful coming together often leaves the less with even less. The more articulate have an advantage over the less also. There are likes and dislikes. History has an awkward way of determining who will work with whom and who won't. A lot of effort is necessary to overcome some of these hurdles to bring stakeholders together.

The problem analysis of each group and the analysis of their dreams and aspirations can provide interesting and useful insights as to what levers will be necessary to move them towards togetherness. In Sri Lanka some of the environmental advocates in civil society and in non-governmental organizations felt so strongly about, what they considered, the indifference and in some cases the 'malice' of government that they refused to sit together with government stakeholders. Finally what brought them to the table was the fact that, while each group saw the problems differently, they all realized that they had a common aspiration, that of protecting the environment (for their own reasons). And the possibility of concretely contributing to conserving the marine reef resources, in this case, made it possible for the groups to overcome their hostility and come together.

The analysis of problems is not done to find out whether different stakeholders understand it right (though that too is important) but rather to understand their logic, irrespective of its rightness or wrongness. The 'why' of their thinking! The problem analysis and the analysis of their aspirations and dreams together need to be sifted through to look for strategic inroads and opportunities, commonalities that can help bring groups together in spite of their differences or even common differences. One

People do not come together unless they have a very good reason or reasons to do so.

The analysis of problems is not done to find out whether different stakeholders understand it right (though that too is important) but rather to understand their logic, irrespective of its rightness or wrongness. The 'why' of their thinking!

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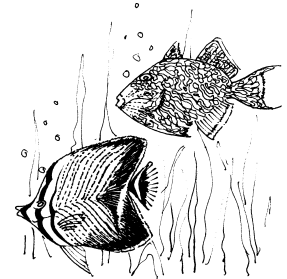
must not be too optimistic because the balance between the reasons to come together and to stay apart is easily tipped. There are situations that cannot be resolved irrespective of the efforts and the quality of the analysis. This stage of the process is important in that it might give clear and early indications that coming together (at least at that point in time) is not feasible socially or politically. A judicious stepping back at this stage can save a lot of time and money.

Step 7. Mediate consultations and negotiations to facilitate agreements on problems and solution options &

Step 8. Mediate consultations and negotiations to facilitate evolution and agreement on management plans

While coming together is a beginning, staying together is the real challenge. To help stakeholders to share their concerns and views, to really listen to each other and later, through consultations and negotiations, to agree on problem definitions and priorities, solution options, choice of approaches to management requires time, lots of patience and lots of facilitation, mediation and conflict resolution skills because each group in coming to agreement is actually agreeing to win some and loose some. And this is a difficult thing to do in the best of circumstances. While the facilitator's role is best neutral, focusing on the process and not on the content of the dialogue, to help the process to progress it may be necessary for facilitators to come up with 'mutually acceptable' options.

Ideally, the consultations will result in a management plan, which is agreed to by all parties as the best of possible deals they can get and that it answers each of their needs to an extent that it is worth going with.

Step 9. Empowerment of stakeholders to implement, monitor and enforce management plans.

A management plan agreed to by all stakeholders may be a great achievement but is merely a piece of paper riding on the hopes of many unless it is legitimized. The next critical step for government (a very important stakeholder indeed) is to agree to the

plan within the context of fisheries and other legislation and to empower by law the stakeholder group to implement the plan. This not only requires enabling legislation that accepts the stakeholder management process but also has processes by which the stakeholder group can be legitimized as a decision making body in the eyes of the law and government. Without this empowerment the whole process will come to nothing. The importance of this would suggest that it might not even make sense to embark on the stakeholder management journey unless the enabling legislation is in place.

Step 10. Implementation, monitoring and enforcement of management plan.

With empowerment, the process of implementing the management plan, ensuring the compliance of all parties, enforcement where necessary and regular monitoring and evaluation can begin with different stakeholders playing their roles as agreed to in the plan.

Step 11. Review and evaluate management plan and outcomes and restart process to evolve new management plan.

All agreements are necessarily time bound as the very conditions that generated the agreements change over time, and perhaps more so in fisheries than most other sectors. Agreements have to be reviewed and assessed and redrawn if necessary. The management plan should clearly specify the periodicity of such reviews, the process of the review and the process of renegotiating the agreement, which in most cases will require a repetition of some parts of the process that generated the agreement in the first place.

This then, very briefly, is the stakeholder management process, necessarily simplified. It is essential at this point to pause and reflect whether a process such as this will adequately and appropriately address the nature of the problem as discussed in Chapter One.

If it does, we can go ahead and look at the process in more detail, adding a toolkit of methods and approaches that can be used to flesh out the process and finally raising questions and issues that are not as yet answered, but need to be.

Stakeholder Analysis: Process and Toolbox

It is useful to remind ourselves of the ultimate purpose of the stakeholder approach to fisheries management before we set out to work our way through the process and methods of stakeholder analysis. The purpose of the approach is to bring together all the stakeholders so that they can identify and agree on the problems they would like to solve together to meet their needs and aspirations. Having done that the idea is for the stakeholders to come up with mutually acceptable and beneficial solution options and management plans, which, if empowered to do so, they can implement and enforce collectively. The problem as we discovered is that different stakeholders often perceive problems and solutions quite differently, and this leads to disagreements and conflicts. Worse, stakeholders can come from very different backgrounds with different levels of information and power. All this makes even coming together, never mind working together, very difficult. Unless, some stakeholders, like say the fishery agency, take the lead and help facilitate the coming together.

This chapter helps us to understand whom to involve, why to involve and how to involve in the process of management. Referring back to Chapter 2 and the overall process of the stakeholder approach to fisheries management, and, in particular, to the Figure 3, we will look closely at the first 5 steps of the process that will not only facilitate the coming together of the stakeholders but provide enough learning to give direction to the remaining process of working together.

In our particular context of managing fisheries, stakeholder analysis can help identify:

- The stakeholders involved and having a stake in a particular activity or problem (that needs management) and can either affect or be affected by the situation and any interventions planned;

…whom to involve, why to involve and how to involve in the process of management…

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- Stakeholder's perceptions, the way they see and give meaning to the resource system, the socio-ecosystem and its problems and the values that guide their actions;

- The multiple interests, aspirations and objectives of the stakeholders;

- What each stakeholder can contribute to resolving conflicts, solving problems and managing resources in terms of influence, power, authority and resources;

- Who belongs to which group and who interacts with whom and how?

- Who gets what, who wins and who looses due to particular actions?

- Which stakeholder has to participate at which stage of the process and to what extent?

- What are the risks and viability of different interventions from the points of view of different stakeholders?

- What are the possible trade-offs and conflicts and, therefore, what could be the politically and socially feasible coalitions amongst stakeholders?

Broadly speaking stakeholder analysis looks at power relationships among groups and individuals, considers their interests, concerns and aspirations, determines how and wherefrom they communicate and learn, identifies commonalities, differences and conflicts and provides all this information to enable facilitators to evolve the strategic means of bringing them together to work towards better managing their fisheries in a socially and politically feasible manner.

In the BOBP, by trial and error, we came up with a loose checklist of questions, to keep in the back of our mind and guide us in stakeholder analysis and they rather nicely divided into three broad areas of thrust, namely identifying stakeholders, understanding their perception and understanding how they communicate and learn and, therefore, change.

See the box for a checklist used by BOBP to guide its stakeholder analyses

BOBP's Informal Checklist to Guide Stakeholder Analysis

Checklist # 1: Identifying Stakeholders

Who are involved in the activity or fishery that is in need of management?

1. What is the activity or fishery that needs management, what are its components and how its components are linked together?
2. What are the (tentative) geographical boundaries of the activity or fishery to be managed? How do these boundaries changes if the impacts on the activity or fishery are taken into consideration?
3. Who are involved in the various components of the activity and in actions that affect the activity, positively and negatively?
4. Who are not involved in the activity or fishery directly but influence it or are influenced by it? How and why are they influenced by the activity or influence the activity?
5. Who (amongst those involved in or not involved in the activity) oppose the activity and for what reasons?
6. Who (amongst those involved in or not involved in the activity) are supportive of the activity and for what reasons?
7. Who clearly benefit from the activity and how?
8. Who feel that they suffer because of the activity and how?

What do we know about the stakeholders?

1. Who are the stakeholders? Approximately how many of them are there? Where do they live and practice their livelihoods and activities?
2. Are the stakeholders organized as a group? If so how cohesive and functional is the group? What kind of leadership does it have? What are the prevalent decision making processes?
3. What do the stakeholders actually do in the activity/fishery?
4. How did they get involved in their particular activities and what motivated them to do so? When did they get into the activities?
5. Are the stakeholders involved in other activities? If so, what else do they do, when, where how and why?

6. How do they rank their various activities in terms of importance, social relevance and earnings?

7. What are the other livelihood options available to the stakeholders? Why are they not involved in these alternative livelihoods?

Ckecklist # 2: Understanding Stakeholder Perceptions

Description of Activities/ Changes/ Problems/ Solution Options

1. How does each stakeholder describe the activities they are involved in and their roles in it?

2. How do the stakeholders benefit by participating in the activities?

3. Where are the decision points in the activity process? Or, given the flow of events that add up to the activity, at what points does the stakeholder have to take decisions to decide what to do and how to do the next step? What is the stakeholder's understanding of the system within which the decision is taken? What sources of information or who else influences the decision? What are the criteria used in making these decisions?

4. If we go back, say, ten years or to the time when the activity began and trace the history of the activity, have there been any important changes that have influenced the activity, changed its direction or changed the way in which it is practiced? Who or what was involved in causing the changes? Was there a change in thinking or available information that resulted in the changes? If so, what were these?

5. Do the stakeholders perceive any problems that are affecting the activity or their benefits from the activity? What are these problems? What in their opinion are the causes of these problems?

6. What can be done to solve these problems? What are the solution options? Who else can do anything to help solve these problems? Is there something the particular stakeholder can do to help solve these problems? If the solutions are known why are they not being implemented?

7. How do the stakeholders describe the impact of their activities on the environment, the fishery resource and on other stakeholders of the activity? Are these impacts positive or negative? Could they have been avoided? If so, how?

8. Do the stakeholders know of any fisheries that have either declined or collapsed? What do they feel were the reasons for the decline or collapse of these fisheries? Could the decline or collapse have been avoided by any actions taken by any of the stakeholders? If so, what actions?

9. Do the stakeholders see their involvement in their activities as a long term one, such as something that their children could also be involved in? Is it important for them to ensure that the activity be sustainable over a period of time?

10. Who in the opinion of the stakeholders are primarily responsible for ensuring that activities are practiced in a manner that ensures their sustainability over a period of time?

11. In the opinion of the particular stakeholder, which other stakeholder's decisions and actions determine, control or affect their actions? How and why?

12. Do stakeholders feel that if they all come together they will be able to solve the problems their activities face? Or, do they feel that outside help and intervention are required? What kinds of help are required and from whom?

Checklist # 3: Understanding Stakeholder's Communication Systems

How do stakeholders communicate and get influenced?

1. If we consider the communication linkages among stakeholders, and the changes and innovations that have occurred in their activities, identify the particular linkages where one affected the other through their actions, information or advice.

2. In each linkage, is the stakeholder aware that the other's actions, information or advice caused them to change or innovate? If so how do they describe the process? What do they feel about the stakeholder and the input that caused the change or innovation?

3. Do they consider the other stakeholder's influence, information, advice and actions useful and relevant? If so, why? If not, why not?

4. How timely was the stakeholder's input or intervention?

5. How credible or trustworthy was the information or advice received? Why?

6. How accessible is the stakeholder and his inputs? Do they feel comfortable and free to approach the stakeholder?

7. What does stakeholder giving the information, advice or help expect in return? Is this expectation considered fair? If not, why not?

8. How was the information actually communicated? Through dialogue, in writing, by radio, TV, cinema or advertisement or through demonstration?

9. What kind of media access do stakeholders have? Which medium do they prefer for different kinds of information? Describe and rank the media for credibility?

10. Does the stakeholder have any preferences about media? What are they and what are the criteria for the decision?

Defining Boundaries – Setting the Stage

Before identifying stakeholders to work with and getting to know them better there is a need to broadly (and tentatively) draw the boundaries of the 'problem or problems' that raised the need for management, in the first place. Unless the problem and its boundaries are broadly known we shall not have the parameters necessary to even start identifying the stakeholders. Further, the boundaries will also show the overlap of the problem space with different political jurisdictions, the institutions and leadership of which by definition will play key roles in the management process. So the first task is to get a broad understanding of the problem and roughly draw its boundaries, with the full knowledge that the boundaries will change as our knowledge accumulates and clarifies.

In a fishery management context, the problem could either deal with a particular fishery or fisheries, or deal with a geographic area where the problem is encountered or deal with particular groups of people or communities who are either causing the problem or suffering its impact and a good beginning can be made evolving the boundaries by listening to people about the problem that is affecting them. Describing the problem and its causes, where it is happening, what are its impacts and whom it affects, can give us clues as to the spatial spread of the problem. Let us consider, as an example, defining the problem that the Provincial Fishery Service of North Sumatra and BOBP was confronted with in Sibolga, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The Provincial Fishery Service was concerned about the rapid growth of mariculture (of reef grouper) in Sibolga Bay, for sale as live fish in the Singapore and Hong Kong markets. Initial visits and discussions with a variety of people helped in defining the problem, which was associated with and linked to other problems that finally resulted in a fairly complex situation whose boundaries went well beyond the mariculture sites in Sibolga Bay.

Figure 4 provides in diagrammatic form the problems and its spatial boundaries showing how the boundaries expanded as the problem was better understood, to include small fishers, anchovy lift net fishers, local industry, the city, and the nearby coral reefs. Grouper mariculture needs grouper juveniles, which were being collected by small-scale fishers from nearby reefs, and there was the possibility of over fishing the groupers (partly because they are slow to grow and mature and removing juveniles before they have a chance to breed can affect the stock and partly because fishing for grouper juveniles can cause damage to the coral reef habitat, in turn affecting it several other species). There was also the demand for fish as feed for the groupers, which drove the small fishers to fish intensively (using less than eco-friendly fishing gear) and brought them into conflict with the medium-scale anchovy lift net fishery. The small fishers were also, incidentally getting low prices for the fish they caught because of its poor quality. The anchovy fishery was in trouble because there were too many of them and using lights to fish (crowded together in close proximity) was resulting in reduced catches. Further, they were also in trouble because the quality of processing of anchovies amongst their competitors in Malaysia was far superior. Finally, it turned out that the grouper mariculture was adding nutrients (Left over feed and waste generated by the fish) to the bay ecosystem and compounding the impact that the silt and pollution from saw mills and plywood factories (that were being washed into the bay) and the raw sewage from the township were already having. In other words the mariculture of grouper, an otherwise lucrative business was heading for big trouble due to a wide variety of interlinked reasons.

As mentioned earlier either the fishery, the geographic area or the people facing problems can help in defining the boundaries. In Bangladesh, the problem started with concern about the destructive nature of the ESBN fishery, which along with the push net were the primary ways of catching juvenile shrimp *(P. monodon)* for the

See Figure 4 for a diagrammatic representation of the spatial spread of the problem in Sibolga, North Sumatra, Indonesia and the way the boundaries expanded even as the problem was better understood
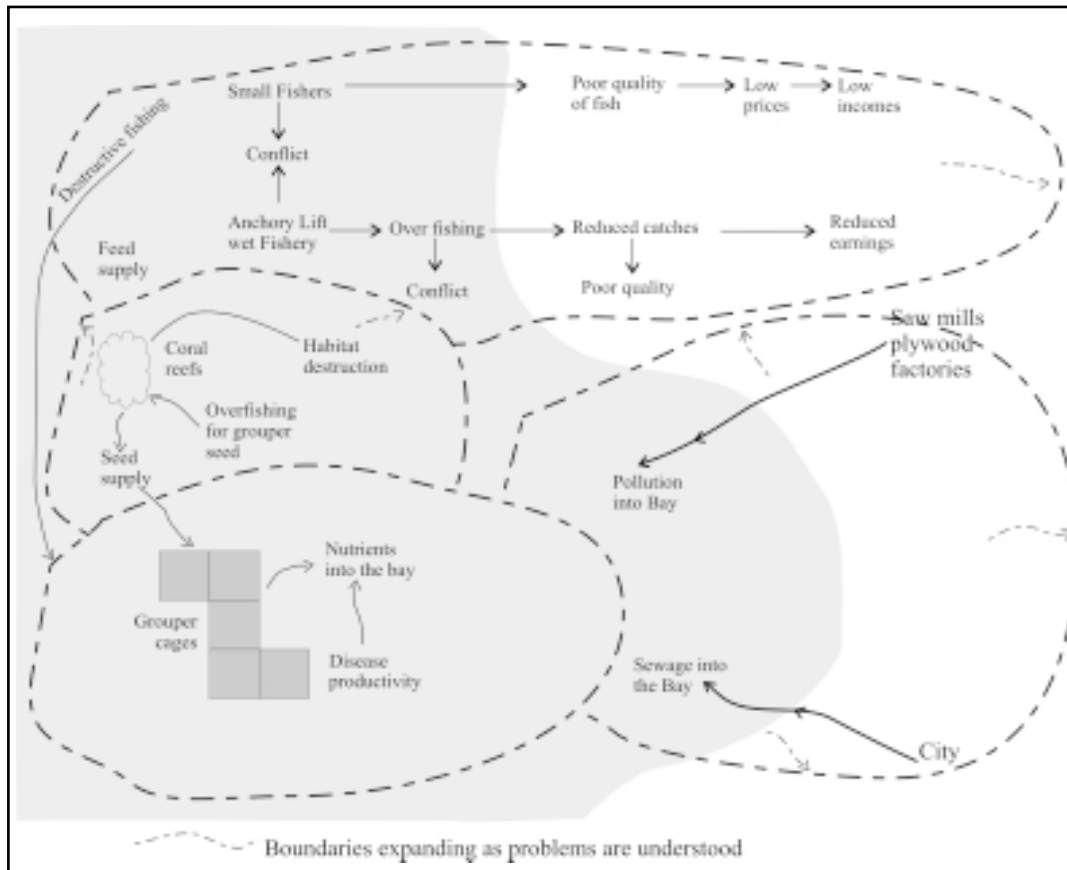
Figure 4: Problems and Expanding Boundaries encountered in Sibolga, North Sumatra, Indonesia

rapidly growing aquaculture sector. It soon became evident that the ESBN fishery worked interactively with six other fisheries, all of which fished the shrimp, but at different parts of its life cycle. So the only way to address the ESBN fishery was to worry about fisheries spread all over the coast and well out to sea. In Thailand the conflict amongst fisheries and between fisheries and tourism turned out to be neatly bounded by Phang Nga Bay, where it was all happening. In other cases like fisheries dealing with small pelagics not just states but neighbouring countries may well be involved, dramatically expanding the boundaries of the problem.

At this early stage of the analysis it is very important to realize that the boundaries drawn from initial analysis and discussions will change as the stakeholder analysis progresses and more is known. So the results of this first exercise should be seen as the beginning of an iterative process and a learning exercise. The initial analysis though does help by broadly drawing the boundaries and helping to generate the first cut of parameters that can be used in identifying stakeholders.

Identifying the Stakeholders

The process of identifying stakeholders and deciding (hopefully with the stakeholders) who has to be included and who would rather not be involved in the analysis and subsequently in the management discussions needs to be carefully done because the success of stakeholder approaches to management depends critically on the inclusion of all the right stakeholders. There are a few approaches that BOBP used and we learned that it is actually useful to try them all to ensure that critical stakeholders are not left out inadvertently. A multiplicity of methods also provides triangulation of the results thus reinforcing the results of individual methods.

It is useful at this point to remind ourselves who is a stakeholder – Anyone

- Involved in the process under consideration
- Who affects the process, positively or negatively

- Affected by the process, positively or negatively
- Who regulates and governs the process

Most fishery management problems are complex enough without having to deal with a large number of stakeholders. It is important to remember at all times that the management process must only try to include those stakeholders who are necessary and unavoidable. This is not just being cynical about the stakeholder process but realizing that many stakeholders (busy as they are with their own lives and problems) are happy not to be involved as long as they are kept informed, are convinced that they will be heard, if necessary, and are assured that the process will be legitimate and transparent. In all cases it must be remembered that which stakeholders are included and which not is a decision that all stakeholders should take.

The most simple and obvious method is to seek out some person who is reputed to be knowledgeable about the problem and to seek his or her advice in identifying stakeholders. In such an approach we could consider persons like the head of a fishing village or fisher's association or an officer of the fishery agency or even a local political leader. The problem with this approach is that it is often biased by the perception of the key informant and might be limited by his or her understanding of the problem.

The 'important' informant approach

The key stakeholder approach starts with identifying a group or an individual who play a key or pivotal role in the problem or the system under consideration. It could, for example be fishers fishing in the very fishery that has shown signs of stress and over fishing. The other stakeholders are then identified by taking the key stakeholders through a process of thinking through several questions on the process or activity step by step or reflecting on recent history and major changes in it. Let us consider each approach separately.

The first approach starts with a key stakeholder; say the main resource user, or fisher group and then tries to get an understanding of what they do, in the process identifying the other stakeholders who are involved in the process, affect it or influence it. The questions are usually very simple and basically enable the informant group to think through their activities or the process they are involved in and includes who, what, where, when, how, why, with what, with whom, why not and so on and so forth. As the story unfolds and the questions get answered the stakeholders emerge as visualized in Figure 5. Figure 6 shows what brackishwater shrimp farmers in South 24 Parganas District of West Bengal in India, visualized as their stakeholders in focal group discussions led by extension staff of the Department of Fisheries amongst the farmers.

The 'key' stakeholder approach

See Figure 5

See Figure 6

The second approach is based on the same concept but is a little more structured. The key stakeholder is helped to describe the process or activity they are involved in, and what they say is recorded on a large sheet of paper as a flow chart. See Figure 7 for a diagrammatic representation. Once the sub-activities of the process are known the stakeholder group is asked where the decision points are in the process and each decision point is then discussed using questions such as:

Using activity flow charts

See Figure 7

- Who takes this decision?
- How is the decision taken?
- What criteria re used in taking the decision?
- Who influences the decision?
- Who controls the action?
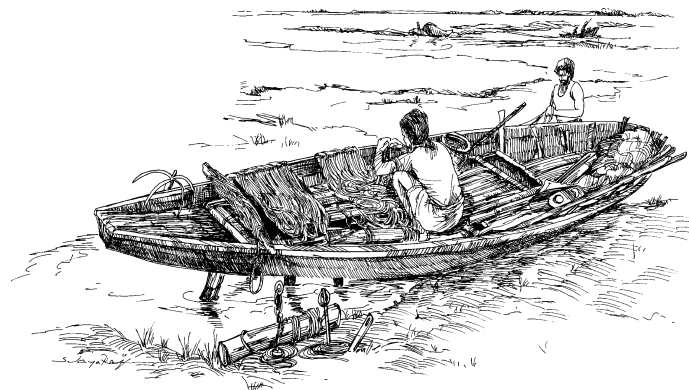- Who can prevent it?
- Who is affected by it?

Here again the stakeholders emerge from the discussion and are recorded. An alternative to the activity flow chart in some cases can be thinking through recent history to understand major changes or innovations introduced and how they happened. For example fishers could be asked to relate the history of their fishery over the last twenty years, identifying important changes such as the introduction of a new gear, or motorization, or in-migration of a group of fishers from elsewhere, or the establishment of a factory. Each of these changes need to be thought through in terms of what actually happened, who did what, what were the implications, who benefited, who lost and so on and so forth. Here again the narrative may throw up stakeholders, who can then be recorded.

The information that these exercises generate go well beyond identifying stakeholders and need to be carefully recorded as they will prove useful, in enabling a better understanding of stakeholder analysis. Descriptions of the process that stakeholders are involved in and their decision-making processes give us valuable insights as to how they perceive and give meaning to the world around them. It also gives us an understanding of the inter-relationships between stakeholders and their relative power and influence. Another valuable by-product of the analysis, even at this early stage, is an understanding of the stakeholders' communication systems – where do they get information from, who do they trust, who do they learn from, how do they spread ideas and learning – which is of vital importance to facilitators in guiding and enabling the learning process of fisheries management.

Once the initial listing of stakeholders is done using the approaches suggested above it is useful to broadly classify the stakeholders into primary and secondary stakeholders.

- Primary stakeholders are those people or groups directly involved in the activity to be managed that will be ultimately affected by the management process, positively or negatively.

Using historical time - lines

By-products of stakeholder identification: stakeholder power, perception and communication analysis!
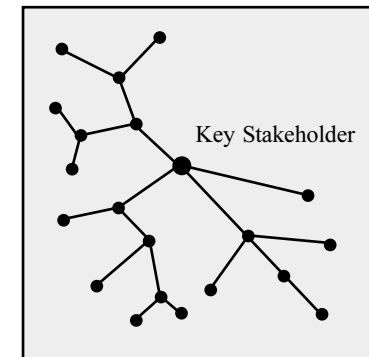
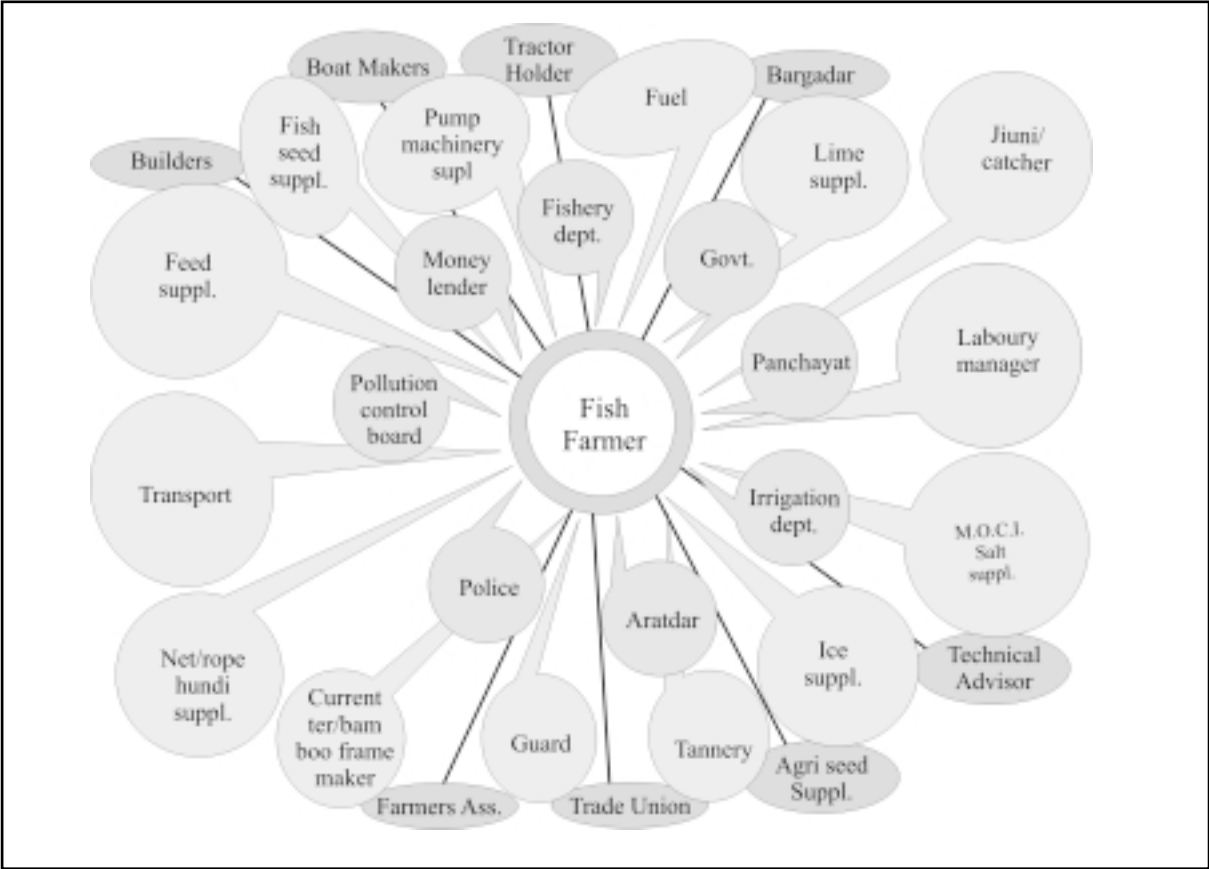Figure 5: Stakeholders identified by questioning key stakeholder visualised as an evolving tree

Figure 6 : Stakeholders as visualized by brackish water shrimp farmers in
South 24-Parganas District of West Bengal, India.

- The secondary groups of stakeholders are usually intermediaries or those who can influence the management process. For example governmental agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations, politicians, local leaders, advocacy organizations, funding agencies would fall into this category.

A checklist is sometimes useful to make sure critical stakeholders have not been missed. Some questions worth keeping in mind always are:

- Have all potential supporters and opponents of the management process been included?

- Have we been gender sensitive in identifying stakeholders?

- Have the vulnerable groups, especially the poorer and weaker groups been identified?

- Will the management process itself create some stakeholders?

Stakeholder identification like all other aspects of stakeholder analysis is tentative, until the next new piece of information comes along to modify and update it and should be recognized as such.

Getting to know stakeholders

Stakeholder analysis is a strategic analysis done for a particular purpose, in this case to facilitate the management of fisheries, and therefore highly focused. It tries to provide answers for some very specific questions such as: What are their interests in managing the resource or fishery? What are the power variations amongst them or who is more or less important? What relative influence would they have on the management process? How do they perceive the problem or situation? How do they perceive the resource and the impact people have on it? How do they communicate amongst themselves and where and from whom do they learn from?

Making sure critical stakeholders have not been missed

Strategic analysis done for a particular purpose, in this case to facilitate the management of fisheries

The answers to these questions would be extremely useful in giving directions to the consultation and negotiation processes that will result in the stakeholders coming up with a management plan. They would also suggest what kind of mutually beneficial options might be acceptable to them as a part of the solution package they will negotiate to address their problems. And they would help those facilitating the process to understand the interrelationships between the stakeholders.

Whom to Involve: Ranking Stakeholders by Importance and Influence

The more the stakeholders involved, greater the complexity and lesser the chances of a mutually agreed-to management plan emerging. So, the involvement of all stakeholders in not necessarily a good thing, terribly undemocratic as it may sound. The question then is, who to involve. One nice thing about reality is that it is impossible to ignore stakeholders who are important players or have considerable impact on the process because they mostly insist on being included. Those with negative impact on the process are naturally reluctant to join but their importance is obvious. What we need to make sure is to ensure that the less powerful and the less articulate, usually the poor resource users, are not forgotten. Therefore, the need to consider (separately) not just the influential and powerful but also the important.

Influential stakeholders are those who have the power to control decisions and actions or can exert influences, which affect the process in a negative manner. To put it more bluntly, influence is best understood as the ability to persuade or force others into taking certain decisions or following certain actions!

Important stakeholders are those whose problems, needs and concerns are important and a priority to the process of management. They are often the least powerful and articulate, largest in numbers and will suffer most if the management of the fisheries fails. For example, women in fishing communities are 'important' though they completely lack any influence.

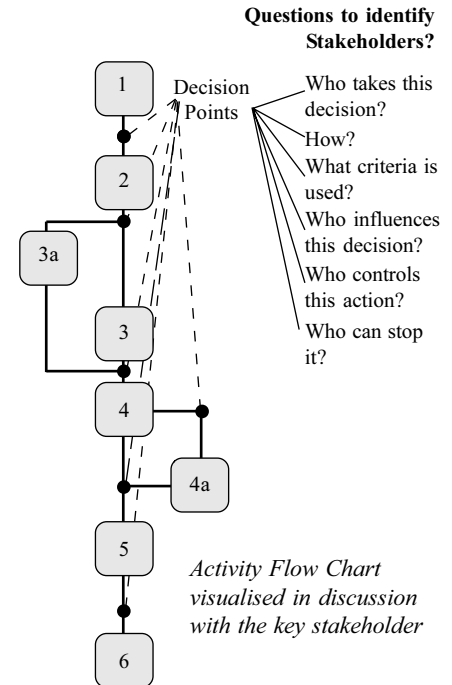*Understanding influential stakeholders from important stakeholders*

Figure 7. The activity flow chart approach to stakeholder identification

Assessing the importance and influence of stakeholders is at the best of times a difficult task as it involves understanding and interpreting a wide range of factors, most of which are qualitative and subjective in nature. However, it is useful to remember, at least in the case of understanding influence, that using one stakeholders' views of another's relative influence, is perhaps a very legitimate way of doing the analysis because influence and power that is not recognized as such by the very people on whom it applies must be a sure way of knowing that it does not exist. So here again BOBP and its partners used the views of stakeholders to decide on relative influence and importance levels, adjusting and modifying them as new knowledge came along.

A few ways of structuring the analysis were to use Venn Diagrams and simple ranking methods, which any book on RRA and PRA would give details of. The process is to get the stakeholder group to first think through what they mean by influence, importance and power and then to get them to identify certain criteria that they agree with as good indicators of influence and importance. The next stage is to get them to use the criteria in ranking the stakeholders they have identified, preferably using visual methods like Venn Diagrams and Ranking Charts. The very process of a group deciding on this acts as a means of verifying the knowledge and ensuring that it reflects the group's thinking.

In our efforts, BOBP used a simple graphic ranking of stakeholders dividing them into the following categories, which determined the level of involvement and the type of involvement:

High Influence	**High Influence**
Low Importance	**High Importance**
Involve where pertinent and necessary	*INVOLVE IN EVERYTHING*
Keep informed	
Observe and listen carefully to feedback	
Low Influence	**Low Influence**
Low Importance	**High Importance**
Do not involve	*Involve in everything*
Keep informed	*Keep informed*
Observe and listen carefully to feedback	*Observe and listen carefully to feedback*
	Assist in participation to ensure equity

Stakeholder analysis, particularly understanding relative influence and importance, has come a long way since BOBP's efforts during its third phase. Readers are strongly recommended to explore the websites referred to in the last section of this document to understand developments in this type of analysis, particularly:

International Institute for Environment and Development (2001) : *Power Tools: Stakeholder Power Analysis* [On line], www.iied.org/forestry/tools or www.livelihoods.org

International Institute for Environment and Development (2001) *: Power Tools: The Four Rs* [On line], www.iied.org/forestry/tools or www.livelihoods.org

The World Bank, See Development Topics>Social Development>Social Analysis>Tools and Methods>Analytical and Consultation Tools>Stakeholder Analysis & Participatory Methods>Problem Trees [On line], www.worldbank.org

Overseas Development Administration (1995) *: Guidance notes on how to do stakeholder analysis of aid projects and programmes* [On line], www.oneworld.org/euforic/gb/stake1.html

Understanding Interests and Perceptions

The primary purpose of this analysis is to understand what stakeholders' interests and perceptions are, in order to better understand and facilitate their involvement in the stakeholder management process and to understand the way they perceive and think. People cannot just be asked what their interests are, because some interests are difficult to articulate and some interests are purposely hidden. Interests are closely connected to people's dreams and aspirations and often determine their decision-making ways and their actions, as these are powerful and emotive forces. The way people perceive and give meaning to the world around them of course determines the way they define problems, understand the causes of the problems and decide on

Ranking and categorizing stakeholders

New ways of doing stakeholder power analysis

solution options. Interests, dreams, aspirations, perceptions have to be deduced from what people say, and more importantly from what people do.

In BOBP we used a checklist of questions to guide our analysis, using a wide variety of tools, often and commonly used in participatory rapid analysis and participatory learning approaches. These are well documented and far too well known to repeat here but readers will find almost all the tools that they would need in the following two documents referred to in the last section of this document:

Philip Townsley (1993) *: A manual on Rapid Appraisal Methods for coastal communities,* BOBP/MAG/6, Bay of Bengal Programme of the FAO of UN, Chennai, India.

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (1998) : *Participatory Methods in Community-based Coastal Resource Management,* 3 Volumes, IIRR, CIDA & IDRC, International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Silang, Cavite, the Philippines.

Toolkits for perception and interests analysis

It would suffice to point out that what we are looking for in this section is the dynamic of the thinking of stakeholders, or what would they think, how would they decide and how would they act when confronted with particular situations and not what they necessarily did in the past. In other words we are looking for answers to 'what if' type of questions. As already pointed out earlier in this section, the tools used and the information gathered in defining the boundaries of the problem, in identifying stakeholders and in ranking them will all add to the understanding of the perceptions and interests of the stakeholders. A warning based on what we learnt in BOBP; in the real world people are able to have multiple interests, where sometimes the interests are contradictory. What people say they think or believe in are often quite different from what they really think and believe in and their acts are better indicators than their words. All this makes life more complex but definitely also more interesting. The point of all these 'wise' statements is that as facilitators we need to

extract and use 'soft' information, using them to ease the way for people to come together, think together and work together. And the more we are open to listening to people and reading the signs around us the better we will be in facilitating the process.

A final word of caution: We are trying to understand how people see the world and think. Please do not confuse it with whether what they see or think is right or wrong (assuming we know whose right or wrong we use as a benchmark). Unless we set aside and suspend judgment while hearing others we might never get to really know them and use the knowledge to help them go where they want to go.

Understanding Stakeholder Communications Systems

How do stakeholders learn and how do they communicate? Learning determines subsequent decisions and actions. What are the sources of information and learning? Which sources are trusted and why? Does the medium of communication matter? The evolution of the collective management process would depend considerably in the facilitators having these kinds of knowledge. The checklist in the box lists a set of questions that we would need to answer in order to get a better understanding of the communications systems and practices of stakeholders. The exercise done with stakeholders groups is participatory tool, which requires the group to visualize information and knowledge linkages in their lives and then to classify the linkages in terms of quality, trust, timeliness, usefulness, and so on. The exercise begins with the group being asked to reflect on the last ten or twenty years of their lives and first to write down major changes in their fishery or other enterprises. Then the group is asked to discuss how the change came about, who the major actors were in it and to draw out or map the linkages that caused or facilitated the change. Each link is then discussed in terms of its relevance, timeliness, accessibility, cost, credibility of the source, the medium used, who controls the linkage and how. The map as it evolves

"What If" thinking

Unless we set aside and suspend judgment while hearing others we might never get to really know them and use the knowledge to help them go where they want to go.

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not only answers the major questions on how and from where people learn and how they communicate but also reveals which linkages are better and the patterns of how communication is often controlled.

This exercise may be full of surprises. There were cases in most of our pilot sites where we discovered that the primary source of fishing technology information and learning was often the fish trader or the moneylender rather than the fishery agency's extension worker.

A lot of good work has been done in this type of analysis, in the process developing better and more participatory tools. The reader is strongly recommended to seek out information starting with the following, referred to in the last section of this document:

FAO & UNDP (1994) *: Participatory Rapid Appraisal of Farmer's Agricultural Knowledge and Communication Systems,* Final Report of the PHI/92/T01 Technical Support Services Project "Sectoral Review of Linkages in Agricultural Knowledge and Communication Systems of the National Agricultural and Resources Research and Development Network (NARDDN), FAO, Rome

Ricardo Ramirez (1997) *: Understanding Farmer's Communication Networks: Combining PRA with Agricultural Knowledge Systems Analysis,* IIED Gatekeeper Series No. 66, IIED, U. K.

Paul G H Engel & Monique Salomon, "RAAKS: A Participatory Action-Research Approach to Facilitating Social Learning for Sustainable Development", Department of Communication and Innovation Studies, Agricultural University Wageningen, The Netherlands.

Assisting Stakeholders in Problem Analysis

Problem analysis is really a carryover from the previous sections. It is first used to specify the boundaries of the issue or problem, even before identifying the
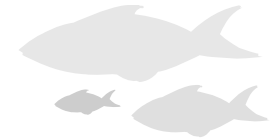
Further readings on tools for stakeholder communications systems analysis

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stakeholders. Next it is used in understanding how stakeholders perceive and give meaning to the world around them (and to problems they face). This is vital because the solutions options emerge from the way problems are defined. In this section problem analysis is done with the stakeholders, one at a time, not just to see the problem or problems and their causes through the eyes of the stakeholders but, more importantly, at a later stage to see what, if any are the commonalities amongst the stakeholders in defining the problem.

In Sri Lanka where government and non-governmental stakeholders were refusing to come together to better manage the ornamental fish industry it was the sharing of the problem analyses that showed the stakeholders that in spite of all their differences the central concern and aspiration of all the groups was to conserve the coral reefs of Sri Lanka, a knowledge that finally persuaded the stakeholders to continue the dialogue. In Bangladesh the problem analysis highlighted the fact that unless alternative livelihood options existed for poor ESBN fishers the chances of their reducing fishing effort or abandoning the fishery to assist in management would be negligible. The lack of obvious livelihood options and the sheer numbers of ESBN fishers brought the management process to a grinding halt in spite of all good intentions. In the Maldives the problem analysis showed that the problem of sustaining reef resources was tied into a variety of very complex issues and concerns including sanitation and waste management in small islands, the changes in labour patterns created by tourism, the practices and technology of building construction. The problem analysis persuaded the Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture Marine Resources to invite a whole range of ministries to initiate a multi-pronged approach to address the various facets of the problem.

How is problem analysis done? Problem analysis, as most other tools discussed in this document is a very participatory exercise based on dialogue and visualization of what is learnt from the dialogue. A stakeholder group is asked to think through and

Problem analysis is not done to find out whether different stakeholders understand the problem right but rather to note and understand their logic, irrespective of its rightness or wrongness.

discuss the problem facing them and then asked to write down, each person to a card, what they think is the main problem. The cards are then laid out on the floor or pinned up for display and discussion. Duplicates are removed. Symptoms are separated from problems. As a group activity everyone is asked to come up with causes to the problems, using "if – then" logic. The same logic is used to develop on the board a hierarchy of problems and their causes (sometimes levels of causes). The linkages between problems are drawn in, evolving in the process a 'problem tree'. The tree diagram, using if – then logic is an excellent means to uncover and analyze the underlying causes of problems and to rank and measure them against each other. Visualizing the process and doing the exercise with a group of stakeholders also results in initial steps towards an agreed to problem definition, so necessary for collective action. It must be emphasized that doing problem analysis is not as easy as it sounds and facilitators get good at helping stakeholders to do it over time. Being rigorous about if – then logic and carefully separating symptoms from problems goes a long way towards good problem analysis.

It is very, very important that readers realize that problem analysis is not done to find out whether different stakeholders understand the problem right but rather to note and understand their logic, irrespective of its rightness or wrongness.

Consolidating problem analyses and identifying strategic commonalities

Until now the stakeholder analysis has been done using one stakeholder group at a time, partly because of convenience and mostly because with differences amongst stakeholders it would be very difficult to manage joint exercises. But with an understanding of the perceptions and problems of the individual groups, the possibility of moving together increases. People do not come together simply because it is the right thing to do or because it helps solve problems. They need good reasons, calculated in their own terms, to come together. There are a whole lot of factors that

with an understanding of the perceptions and problems of the individual groups the possibility of moving together increases.

work against collective efforts including differing power levels, different levels of knowledge and access to information, relative levels of ability to articulate, history and lots more.

Understanding the problem analysis and the perceptions and aspirations of each group could and does give insights as to what levers could be used to bring them together. Strategic commonalities of problems and aspirations are good points around which people are willing to gather, though experience shows that people gather more often around similarities than differences. As the problem analyses and other stakeholder analyses are sifted and brought together, strategic inroads and opportunities become visible that offer opportunities to bring together stakeholders, perhaps first in more similar groupings and later in totality, to think together about the issues confronting them.

One must not be too optimistic about bringing people together. The balance between the reasons to come together and to stay apart is easily tipped and there are situations that just cannot be resolved irrespective of the efforts and the quality of stakeholder analysis. This is the real world and in it things often do not work out the way we all wish it to. It is necessary and important to pause at this stage before beginning to work together, as there may be clear and present signs that coming together at this stage may not be either socially or politically feasible. A judicious stepping back at this stage, in order to wait for changed circumstances and a more opportune time, may be the best option, and one that saves time, money and a lot of heartburn.

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BUT, if the stakeholders see reason in their common problems and aspirations and if these are large enough to overcome their inertia of working together we can go ahead into the next section.

Coming Together and Working Together: The way forward

Let us pause a while and reflect on where in our journey we are at the moment. In the last chapter we looked at the process and the tools required first to, very broadly sketch the boundaries of 'the problem that needs to be managed'. This was done to establish the initial parameters, which would assist in determining who the stakeholders of the problem are. Secondly, we looked at how stakeholders can be identified. Thirdly, we looked at the ways and means of better understanding the stakeholders – in terms of their relative ability (impact & power) to affect the process, their perceptions of problems and solution options, their interests, concerns and aspirations and their modes of communication and learning. Fourthly, we learnt how we could spend time with each stakeholder group in order to see the problems and solution options through their eyes.

This kind of knowledge could enable us to bring together the stakeholders around commonalities of perceptions either of problems that they all would want solved or of situations and conditions they all aspire for. Coming together is a success but the real journey towards management is just beginning. Where do we go from here in the journey to better manage fisheries?

Until this point of this practitioner's guide the information and learning that we have shared with you is based on our experience and ground-truthed in the pilot exercises that BOBP helped its member countries to implement during its third phase. From here on what you as a reader are going to encounter is careful and conservative conjecture and extrapolation, of what might have been if we in BOBP had the time and resources to continue the pilot exercises to their logical conclusions.

As a matter of fact the member-countries did commit themselves to moving forward on their own because they as well as the stakeholders had caught a glimpse of what could be achieved by coming together. The way forward that is proposed is not just

From here on what you as a reader are going to encounter is careful and conservative conjecture and extrapolation, of what might have been had we in BOBP had the time and resources to continue the pilot exercises to their logical conclusions.

imagination because what has been recommended has often been practiced, in bits and pieces, in other fields of endeavour suggesting that the journey is well within the realm of possibility. **So proceed with caution and faith and seek to validate and ratify our conjecture and extrapolation with your experience and learning.**

Working Together: The way forward

Having come together around strategic commonalities, what should the next steps forward be for the stakeholders? The following steps, at the very least, may need to be taken:

1. Consultations and negotiations to agree on and prioritize the problems to be addressed.
2. Consultations and negotiations to agree on solution options that could solve the agreed-to problems.
3. Consultations and negotiations to evolve and agree on a management plan.
4. Ratification of the management plan and empowerment of the stakeholders by the government agency, mandated by law to manage fisheries to implement, monitor and enforce the plan.
5. Reconsideration of the management plan after an agreed-to period based on its success and the circumstances prevailing at the time of review and, if necessary a repetition of the cyclic process of stakeholder management as described above.

Mediation & Facilitation: Making it happen

The heavy emphasis on consultations and negotiations in what may seem like a rational, step by step process needs some clarification. A condition for stakeholders to come together to work collectively is that they recognize either a common problem or a common aspiration, preferably of a high enough priority that it justifies to the stakeholders overlooking the differences that divide them. The common problem or aspiration should naturally be such that it requires the stakeholders to come together to resolve at level of aggregation higher than what they normally function at. This is

A condition for stakeholders to come together to work collectively is that they recognize either a common problem or a common aspiration, preferably of a high enough priority that it justifies to the stakeholders overlooking the differences that divide them.

one important criterion that needs to be kept in mind by those facilitating the consultations and negotiations. If the problem or the aspiration can be addressed by one of the stakeholders, say fishers, by doing something exclusively at their normal level of functioning, say by reducing their fishing effort by one half, then there will be no incentive to go to the bother of working together.

Making visible to all stakeholders the common problem and/or the common aspiration, which requires them to socially construct a new system, involving them all and the natural resources, interacting with each other and in turn dependent on each other is the whole purpose of the consultations and negotiations.

Once this social construct is in place and agreed to by all the stakeholders they will have a reason to work together on joint interventions to address their problems. The learning process, through facilitated consultations and negotiations, will be difficult and most probably will occur in small incremental steps. And there will be times when previous perceptions and assumptions will need to be discarded by some of the stakeholders in order to make the necessary quantum jump in their thinking. These jumps will require stakeholders to not only invest in faith but to overcome the uncertainty, by assessing and testing the risks and difficulties as they arise. What will help stakeholders to overcome their uncertainty and agree to work at levels of aggregation that are higher than the one's they normally work at? Workable and feasible alternatives to what they are doing would definitely help them to make up their minds. The alternatives cannot just be ideas but options supported by technologies and resources. In other words, to use the example of the ESBN fishery in Bangladesh, if the sensible agreed to means of reducing the impact of these fisheries it is for the fishers to give up the fishery and seek alternative livelihoods, then in order to help them take the risk of changing their very ways of life the alternative livelihoods offered should be visible and viable and the skills, technologies, management, resources and markets better be there and accessible to them. If not, it will be only a mirage and not a trustworthy alternative!

What will help stakeholders to overcome their uncertainty and agree to work at levels of aggregation that are higher than the one's they normally work at?

In negotiations amongst stakeholders it is but natural that the individual interests of different stakeholder groups will have to be accommodated and even compromised. A multitude of perceptions will need to be adapted and even changed. Stakeholders, even if such changes are supported by foolproof logic, will hesitate unless they are assured that they are not being singled out for change and other stakeholders too will have to go through similar shifts of thinking and change. **If there is even the slightest suspicion that some stakeholders are more equal than others and are getting a free ride the process will break down.**

All these conditions to lubricate and enable consultation and negotiation are not easy to achieve. Stakeholders' interests are often in conflict. One person's solution is another's problem. They wield different levels of power and have access to different skills, capacities and information. Given these variations, coming together and working together would be impossible without conflict resolution, negotiation, accommodation, convergence and agreement. And to expect all this without facilitation and mediation would be just a dream.

to expect all this without facilitation and mediation would be just a dream.

Central to the success of the stakeholder approach to management is the facilitation/mediation role. There is enough experience in similar efforts in other sectors to suggest that non-coercive facilitation and mediation by third parties can help stakeholders overcome their differences and build "agency" in a collective sense or the capacity to act together.

If we recollect from earlier chapters, the nature of fisheries management problems we realize that the facilitation required to get stakeholders to undertake such efforts is of two kinds, the first technical and the second social. Technical facilitation helps stakeholders to better understand the ecosystem, the resources within the system, the impacts of extracting the resources and impacts of various human activities on the ecosystem and the resources. For example such technical facilitation could play an important role by:

- Using participatory mapping of fishing to visualize interactive fisheries and the intensity of fishing effort;
- Developing methods and indicators to visualize the impacts of various human activities on the marine ecosystem;
- Inculcating observing and recording habits to enable people to recognize trends;
- Demystifying science by providing explanations and theories to better understand what is being observed;
- Suggesting and explaining technologies and practices for improved management and conservation.

On the social front the facilitation will include helping stakeholders to resolve conflict, managing inequities amongst them, 'arming' weaker stakeholders by giving them access to information and helping build their agency, visualizing and articulating complexity, enabling stakeholders to suspend judgment and begin to see the other's point of view and by proposing mutually beneficial solution options.

Who can facilitate stakeholder approaches to management? Not only would such facilitators require a unique set of tools and competencies but also they would, more importantly, need to be considered neutral and fair by the stakeholders. Unfortunately, experience shows that government fishery agencies and especially their extension staff often do not have the capacities to do justice to such demands. They would not only require their capacities built but also would need to change their attitude and perceptions. **At least initially fishery agencies may need to find and even hire neutral third party facilitators to help the process until their own staff have the necessary competencies and the agency itself, through participating fairly and transparently in the process, earns the respect of the other stakeholders as an honest facilitator or broker.**

At this point of the debate the reader may get the feeling that fishery agencies have a lesser role to play in stakeholder approaches to fisheries management. All they need to do is to hire facilitators, empower them when they come up with acceptable

Who can facilitate stakeholder approaches to management?

Government agencies may actually end up doing more rather than less, but they would be doing things differently.

management plans and wish them luck! It might seem like that but it is not true. Government agencies may actually end up doing more rather than less, but they would be doing things differently. Let us consider it in some detail. Fishery resources belong to the country and government is mandated to manage it. They do it by developing policy, creating rules and regulations and enforcing them. As important stakeholders they usually have most of the scientific knowledge and capability. By agreeing to the stakeholder approach to fisheries management fishery agencies make the process more socially feasible, by involving the stakeholders in the process. However, it is the fishery agency that will have to lead the stakeholder process, guide it, empower it and through participative but firm enforcement ensure its success. There can be no stakeholder approach with out the key stakeholder – government. Fishery agencies will have to over time develop their skills and competencies in new areas such as stakeholder identification, stakeholder analysis, mediation of consultations and negotiations and resolution of conflicts to make stakeholder management happen.

Stakeholder approaches to fisheries management in trying to address the very nature of the problem seems to be the right stuff. All pros and no cons!? Unfortunately, this is not always the case. And it helps to address the problems of the process it self. It is a difficult process; at least it seems more difficult for a fishery agency, instead of being able to take all the decisions and enforcing them. It does take more time, at least initially. The objectives and the process are difficult to control as in most participatory efforts. The important thing to remember is that the objective of the stakeholder approach to fisheries management is not to arrive at the best possible management system but to arrive at the best possible management system that actually works. It is the art of the possible. There are a few other problems. The process does tend to get political, which is natural because managing people's ownership and user-rights of resources unfortunately is and always will be a political act. What is significant perhaps is that fishery agencies in order to practice stakeholder approaches to fisheries management will have to change the way they do business, first by developing a new range of competencies and secondly by becoming more participatory.

Stakeholder approaches do have problems

What is significant perhaps is that fishery agencies in order to practice stakeholder approaches to fisheries management will have to change the way they do business, first by developing a new range of competencies and secondly by becoming more participatory.

In the final analysis stakeholder approaches will be attempted and practiced if its benefits clearly outweigh its costs and bother. What are the benefits of the approach that would justify an agency putting up with the problems described earlier? First, it brings all the parties into the process and makes it more participatory. Problems get raised and the process provides clear agreement on the problems and their priorities. By working together and sharing responsibility, and with good mediation, conflicts are easier to resolve, particularly if they are identified and surfaced before they become serious. From the standpoint of fishery agencies, by involving the stakeholders in management and enforcement, there is a possibility of spending less on enforcement – and this is significant because some fishery agencies spend up to one third of their budget just on enforcement and even then it isn't very successful. By giving 'ownership' of the resources and of the process of management to the stakeholders it makes them more responsible and the chances of sustaining the management process in such circumstances increases. Finally, with all stakeholders involved and negotiating, the chances are that the process will be more equitable than in cases where a few control it. In other words everyone may come out winning though not as much as they would want to.

Where to use the approach and where not to?

Is the stakeholder approach always applicable? MOST CERTAINLY NOT!! The nature of the problem determines the nature of the solution. The stakeholder approach lends itself to complex multi-stakeholder situations. It can only succeed if everyone comes together and not having a common shared high priority problem or aspiration could block the process. It is possible to list some characteristics that may increase the proclivity of success in stakeholder approaches and they are:

- A clearly bounded problem for management that avoids overlapping interests;
- A clearly identified group of stakeholders;
- Clearly defined and agreed to objectives;
- Sound and representative leadership of stakeholder groups;
- Stakeholder organized into cohesive groups;
- The possibility of achieving visible and quick benefits;

- Active participation of all stakeholders;
- A situation where rules and regulations are enforced, disputes are settled expeditiously and punishment for breaking the rules is visible and consequential;
- Fair and legitimate management process;
- The ability of government to empower the stakeholders and delegate authority to them to enable them to manage the process and enforce the rules;
- Transparency in the process; and
- Fair and neutral facilitation and support of the process over a long period of time.

A long, basic and not too impossible list determined by the very nature of the problem.

The experience with stakeholder approaches to natural resources management is still relatively meager though learning is rapidly accruing. The process is being tried out in forestry, fisheries and coastal zone management; learning tools are being refined and successes are beginning to trickle in. BOBP attempted the approach in its seven member-countries with various levels of success during its third phase. Five years is a very short time in process-oriented activities and definitely a short time to judge the success of participatory development efforts. But some successes were visible even then – such as agreements on problems to be addresses and their priorities, a clear realization that some resources could not be managed without the active involvement of all stakeholders, concrete efforts to create and modify policy and legislation to enable and carry stakeholder approaches, and facilitation of conflict resolution. The process seems to be taking root in Sri Lanka in managing the ornamental fish sector, in the Maldives in integrated reef management, in Thailand in better managing the fisheries of Phang Nga Bay. These few successes are enough reason to give the approach a serious try. Perhaps the most important reason to try the stakeholder approach is that if a process that addresses the very nature of the problem were to fail where would we turn to?

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Uncharted Waters: Some emerging issues and concerns

The stakeholder approach to enabling fisheries management was an exploratory exercise for the BOBP based on a firm belief that an activity involving complex social and ecosystems and further complicated with user rights and vested interests could not be amicably addressed without the active involvement of all stakeholders. Like exploratory journeys, the process had to be evolved as it progressed. The evolution was partly directed by the particular context, partly through adapting the learning of others, where it existed and partly a judicious gamble. It sometimes worked and sometimes did not, but invariably there was learning. The seven pilot exercises undertaken by the members – countries, one in each of them, on occasion raised issues and questions for which we did not immediately have the answers to. There was no doubt in our minds that future efforts and new approaches would eventually figure ways to address some of these, as these were not the kinds of issues or questions that would just go away. The very success of participatory, stakeholder approaches to fisheries management would depend on our ability to come up with answers to them. In this section we dwell upon some of the more important of these issues in the hope that readers who take the process further will be able to address them.

Whose job is it to facilitate stakeholder approaches to management?

Somebody has to bell the cat, as it were, define the boundaries of the problem, identify the stakeholders, get to know them better, bring them together, mediate their consultations and negotiations and generally nurture and support the process. Can it be one of the stakeholders, for example, the fishery agency of the government, which in most cases is mandated by law to regulate fisheries and therefore to enable its management? Would a neutral third party be more acceptable by all the stakeholders?

In the experience of the BOBP most stakeholders felt they were happy that we played the facilitating role because we were considered 'more neutral'. It also made it

possible for stakeholders with differences of opinion and opposing vested interests to be able to justify coming together. This is not as academic an issue as it seems. In Sri Lanka, in the exercise to improve the management of the ornamental fish sector the fishery agency of the government found itself in conflict over jurisdiction with other government agencies like the agency concerned with wildlife. The non-governmental and civil society organizations who were instrumental in raising the whole issue of better managing the sector on environmental grounds did not want to have anything to do with the fisheries agency because they felt, rather strongly, that fishing was the problem and therefore could not be part of the solution. It was the 'neutrality' of BOBP and its ability to show through the problem analysis that all the stakeholders, in spite of their differences, had a central concern of wanting to protect and conserve the coral reefs that finally brought everyone to the table.

Stakeholder analysis provides the analysts with a lot of information about the ways in which stakeholders perceive and give meaning to their situations and in fact of the way they think. To be fair, we need to be concerned about how this information is put to use and for what objective. In other words, it is not too farfetched, especially given the political nature of the fisheries management process and the vested interests involved that such information could be used cynically, to manipulate rather than to facilitate. And to take the process in particular directions to benefit particular stakeholders. Perhaps it is this fear that raises the whole issue of who facilitates the process.

…information could be used cynically, to manipulate rather than to facilitate.

Did BOBP learn anything in this regard? We acted on behalf of and in concert with fishery agencies who in any case were our counterparts. But the stakeholders obviously saw us in most cases as independent and neutral players who were not in collusion with the fishery agency. In this the long years that the BOBP worked in the region and its track record of working for and with small-scale fishers must have helped in creating an appropriate image that was acceptable. We do believe that fishery agencies, or for that matter any of the stakeholders, could bring in third party facilitators to help the process along provided the facilitators see themselves as stakeholders and make sure that their own perceptions, objectives and agendas are

… facilitators (should) see themselves as stakeholders and make sure that their own perceptions, objectives and agendas are shared with the other stakeholders, up front.

shared with the other stakeholders, up front. And, more importantly, that the entire stakeholder approach to management process be transparent and accountable to all stakeholders.

Does this mean that the issue has been resolved? Not necessarily, but some learning from the BOBP experiences at least suggests that the issue may be navigable. However, we would be failing our readers if we did not say that the acceptability and legitimacy of the facilitators in the eyes of the stakeholders might be the single most important factor to determine the do-ability and success of the approach.

What defines the boundary? Nature or Politics?

Defining the boundary of the problem to be managed is crucial because unless everyone is agreed on this there may be no criteria to decide the stakeholders of the system. So this is often the first task of the process, though we must hasten to add that often as the process progresses and we get to know the stakeholders and the problems as they see them better boundaries sometimes change to incorporate the new learning. The question is really, whose boundary matters. Fish, quite naturally are not interested in boundaries and political jurisdictions that are clearly and precisely marked and often jealously guarded. They follow the dictates of the eco-system. In some cases, as in pelagic stocks, the species are migratory and cross several man-made jurisdictions, not just village and state boundaries but national boundaries too. If such a fishery has to be managed, its stakeholders will come from a variety of political jurisdictions and this poses some serious problems. Does the existing legislation provide a mechanism for stakeholders from different political jurisdictions to come together to manage the fishery? Would it be able to empower them to do their job?

The key to stakeholder management lies in the system's ability to empower them to act after they have come together to collectively evolve and agree upon a management plan. This decision making platform, which has to be time bound and open to periodic review, since the situation itself is open to change, needs to be

Transparency and accountability is the key!

recognized and its powers and terms of reference clearly demarcated. This in and of itself is not such a difficult problem. What seems to be the problem is for the government and the fishery agency of the government to want to devolve power to the stakeholders and create the policy and legislative environment to enable this. Devolution of power, any power for any reasons seems an extremely unpopular and contentious move. An issue such as this requires a leap in faith (not to mention magnanimity) amongst leaders and policy makers, as they have to create the enabling structure of legislation and administration before actually putting the approach to test. It is old chicken or the egg question; somebody has to set the ball rolling.

Devolution of power, any power for any reasons seems an extremely unpopular and contentious move.

The other aspect of the problem is more universal in that political systems are meant to facilitate governance, some form of control, and natural systems have a tendency to cross borders and dilute the governance and require different jurisdictions to share power and governance. Unfortunately, most policies and laws were designed to govern people and not nature and there is a need to address this dilemma. BOBP's experience in this case showed no easy answers. Several attempts are underway in the region at area management, which lays the groundwork and enables addressing the needs and concerns of an area even if it includes several political entities in it, but it is just a beginning and a lot of work needs to be yet done.

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Some are more equal than others: Dealing with Power

Using the same descriptive phrase 'stakeholders' for all those involved in and affected by or affecting the system sometimes hides the facts that everyday reality and stakeholder analysis reveals – stakeholders come in all sizes and shapes with varying levels of power and therefore of clout to make a difference. Small-scale fishers, often illiterate, poor and not well organized are stakeholders. So are fishery scientists and economists from the national fishery research body. So is the leading wholesale buyer of fish or the senior government bureaucrat government or the local moneylender. We would be, as well-wishers or facilitators, extremely naïve to believe that consultations and negotiations amongst such stakeholders are fair, free and just! Which, in turn

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raises the question: is it possible to create a level playing field amongst such diverse players with hugely varying levels of power? What if anything should the facilitators do about this?

An old Spanish fisher's tale says that when people come together to negotiate they should stick their knives into the table, partly to set weapons aside and approach the dialogue peacefully but partly to display their arms in open to let the other side know that they too have the means of power! What if anything can be done to 'arm' the poor and the weak stakeholder to ensure justice and equity in the process? Can the facilitators get involved and take sides without loosing their credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the other stakeholders?

There are a few ways BOBP found to begin addressing this extremely complex and difficult issue. The poor and the weak stakeholders can be armed to a certain extent by providing them with information, particularly in a form that demystifies what the other stakeholders bring to the table. For example organizing training and workshops for fisher groups to better understand, say, how fishery assessments are done and used in, for example, setting limits to catches, or limits to the size of the fish that can be caught. Such efforts enable fishers to understand and put into perspective the issues and enable them to have a view on the subject and to respond to them. Having said that, we must also share our experience that it is not easy to find scientists, economists and managers with the ability or the inclination to undertake these kinds of tasks. Knowledge is power, but having said that reality suggests that such knowledge does not in any large measure overcome the differences in power, though it makes a sizable dent in the process. Interestingly, the other stakeholders rarely opposed facilitators undertaking such activities.

Another means of a more level playing field emerging was the development of alliances between stakeholders. In some cases non-governmental organizations and civil society working for and with fishers and other deprived groups of stakeholders took sides in solidarity thus strengthening the weaker stakeholders. The only problem

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with this is that while such coming together of interests does happen the facilitators can do little to make it happen.

A third means of curbing the power of the more powerful is to increase the transparency of the process by giving wide publicity to the process, the particular issues and the stands of the different stakeholders with a view to bringing pressure and influence to bear on the more powerful, from powers outside of the system, such as public protest or advocacy by influential agencies not directly involved. In this the support and cooperation of the media is vital. As in all such actions with political intent, the facilitators walk a very fine line with concomitant risks.

There is an aspect of differing and varying power amongst stakeholders, which is quite different from what is discussed above but nevertheless important. This is the ability or the power of stakeholders to convene and participate in the process. The power to participate, to come to meetings and to spend the time is often limited amongst poorer stakeholders because to do so they have to sacrifice earnings and cover the costs of participation in the consultations and negotiations. Being stakeholders and taking an active part is often limited to those who can cover the transaction costs of participating in the process. Here again, BOBP overcame the issue by actually compensating poorer stakeholders what they lost by not being able to earn a livelihood during the periods of their involvement. This while practical does not solve the problem, which needs to be reflected upon.

BOBP's efforts have shown some entry points to address this problematic issue but a lot more needs to be done particularly in terms of understanding who should facilitate such actions, if indeed they are affirmative.

Should stakeholder analysis be put to other uses?

Most people, stakeholders or otherwise do not really like to be the objects of study, even if the intention is to be helpful. With stakeholder analysis adding to costs and time there is always the interest in extracting as much as possible from it.

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For example, BOBP was asked why it did not use the stakeholder analysis also as a baseline study, killing two birds with one stone, as it were. In our experience this is really not possible. Stakeholder analysis is a strategic tool used to identify affected and affecting parties, in the search to bring them together to bargain, in analyzing and understanding perceptions and agendas of the parties and power relationships among them and in designing the collective bargaining process. It is not intended to undertake baseline assessments of socio-economic conditions, though some of these may illuminate stakeholder analysis. In our opinion it is best to separate stakeholder analysis from other kinds of studies.

There is one other, far more compelling reason, to separate stakeholder analysis from other studies. Stakeholder analysis as used in facilitating stakeholder management approaches by its very nature is politically sensitive in the sense it provides the facilitators insights and understanding of perceptions, views, objectives and stands of the various stakeholders to enable them to design a process that brings everyone to the bargaining table to work together. This kind of information, if released or shared with other stakeholders can result in the misuse of the information, manipulation, damage of the management process and seriously affect the credibility of the facilitators. These are but a few forks in the path that BOBP encountered in its journey where the maps and navigational tools were not of much help. The end, however, is clear and that would suggest that more explorations need to be made to refine the maps and the tools to do justice to a methodology that could make a difference to the way we manage resources like fisheries in a just and equitable manner.

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Exploring Further: What to Read, Where to Browse

A Note of Caution and Thanks

There is little, if taken in bits and pieces that is new in this practitioner's guide. One can only claim changed perceptions and configurations of thought. The guide was an afterthought to praxis, in the sense that we at BOBP first went ahead and did what needed to be done and then, wanting to share our experience, decided to write about it. It is like writing the book after the movie of it has been made.

Our process learnt from others and other's work and we took the liberty of adapting it to our needs, learning and changing as we went along. Many helped us journey along, with ideas, tools, feedback and reflection. Some even joined our journey and helped make it what it became. Without their help and support this task would not have been possible and we would like to take this opportunity to, in particular, thank Farida Akhter, Farhad Mazhar, Shahid Hossain Talukder, Shahid Hussain Shamim, Abul Kashem and Shibabrata Nandi in Bangladesh; Dipankar Saha and Isaac Rajendran in India; G. Piyasena and Claude Fernando in Sri Lanka; Maizan Hassan Maniku and N.T. Hasen Didi in the Maldives; Ronald Maine and Jan Johnson in FAO, Rome; Philip Townsley in Italy; and Ricardo Ramirez in Canada. There are many others whose work inspired and guided us and we are indeed thankful to them. We perhaps learnt the most from fishers and other stakeholders of fisheries and to them we are grateful for the privilege of having journeyed together for a while.

The journey needs to continue and some readers, we are sure, will explore further and add to the learning. To assist them in the journey we would like to share with our readers a few documents and websites that helped us along when things got sticky, sometimes confirming and ratifying our actions, sometimes differing and correcting them, often showing us new ways of looking at the world and leading us up exciting and useful paths. The list is not comprehensive and is not intended to be so. It is limited only because we wanted to give our readers a rough road map and let them explore, without too much baggage of past thoughts to hold them back.

For Maizan Hassan Maniku, Director-General of Fisheries Research, Maldives, who over a period of 12 years, helped us to better understand, test and refine the concept and practice of Stakeholder Approach to Managment.

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Rathin Roy (1999) : "Coming Together to Manage Fisheries: Answers to FAQs on the Stakeholder Approach to Fisheries Management", *Out of the Shell – Coastal Resources Research Network Newsletter,* Volume 7 No 2 and *Bay of Bengal Programme Newsletter,* Vol X, No X .

Browsing Sites:

Jacques Chevalier (2001) : *Stakeholder Analysis and Natural Resources Management* [On line], Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, www.carleton.ca/~jchvali/STAKE2.html

Bob Dick (1997) : *Stakeholder Analysis* [On line], www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/stake.html

International Institute for Environment and Development (2001) : *Power Tools: Stakeholder Power Analysis* [On line], www.iied.org/forestry/tools or www.livelihoods.org

International Institute for Environment and Development (2001) : *Power Tools: The Four Rs* [On line], www.iied.org/forestry/tools or www.livelihoods.org

International Development Research Center, *CBNRM Social Science Resource Kit, Volume 7: Stakeholder Analysis, B. Stakeholder Analysis Websites and Discussion Groups* [On line], www.idrc.ca/cbnrm/documents/CBNRM_Toolkit/websites7.html (Particularly useful for websites and discussion groups relating to conflict resolution and management.)

The World Bank, See Development Topics>Social Development>Social Analysis>Tools and Methods>Analytical and Consultation Tools>Stakeholder Analysis & Participatory Methods>Problem Trees [On line], www.worldbank.org

Overseas Development Administration (1995) : *Guidance notes on how to do stakeholder analysis of aid projects and programmes* [On line], www.oneworld.org/euforic/gb/stake1.html

Bay of Bengal Programme