

Report from Theme Session 4

Social and Economic Aspects of Fisheries Management and Governance



ICES



PICES



UNCOVER

+++ update +++ update +++

**Symposium on
Rebuilding Depleted Fish Stocks
– Biology, Ecology, Social Science
and Management Strategies**

**Warnemünde, Germany
3-6 November 2009**



-

Session 4

Few insights were provided by 8 contributors
into the search for economically and socially
robust recovery plans

Economics

Recovery plans are about restoring business opportunities for fishers . Bio-economic models demonstrate huge potential for restoring economic rent, assuming that lessons learned from collapse will improve post-recovery management efficiency.

Providing multiannual guidance in recovery plans, recognizing the importance of limiting interannual variations and being progressive in implementation rather than hard makes a lot of sense in terms of business management; even if it delays the rebuilding of the stocks.

Economics to Social

Fisheries recovery are big multi-player games, with millions of euros and thousand of jobs at stake. Jobs in catch sector but also in processing, in ancillary activities and indirect jobs.

A recovery plan is a time for change and thus expression of power relation to redistribute opportunities. Fishers want to have their claims for the entitlement to fish on restored stock to be taken into account and are able to turn down the best sciences and management system by moving politically.

Fishing sector is rarely homogeneous; there are well organized gear or national groups; others are less in position to voice for their interests; often the case of small-scale fishers. What do we do with leisure and other uncontrolled fishers?

If the biologist don't want to know « what is in the sausage » (how recovery works), the fishers want to know how the pie will be shared. Consensus to be negotiated.

Social (1)

In addition managers do not all hold the same views/values about the key objectives and other claims are also to be considered (conservation, social, fairness).

More than that it also has to do with maintaining culture, norms and social networks (social capital) that are key to social organisations and to social reproduction.

Does maintenance of vivid communities along the coast matters, do employment and culture associated with community embeded fisheries matter ? The answer from social science work evidences is YES.

Social (2)

Fisheries communities are not equal in terms of resilience, some are vulnerable to fisheries collapse and mismanaged recovery plans (high dependence, few alternatives, aging population, low education); others very able of adaptation to change.

So we must engage them, we must commit to listen to their voices and they reward information gathering as much as fish stocks reward.

Community profiles, baseline assessment on social aspects, social impact assessments are useful tools to help design dedicated policies. How to make it part of the overall assessments, how to fund it, participatory approaches needed for data quality ?

Governance (1)

If collapse of fishing stocks is, in most cases, a failure of fishing pressure management, then recovery plan is not likely to work without rethinking the governance structure.

Be more inclusive of all parties: fishers, managers, scientists and NGOs; views are diverse and should be allowed for expression (participatory approach)

Allow for flexibility, don't rule individual/group decision from the top by unnecessarily detailed constraining rules when indifferent to outcomes; objectives to be fixed at high level, operational implementation left at lower levels, down to individuals.

Respect fishers' views and maintain vivid social networks and organisations is important

Governance (2)

Work to gain legitimacy and commitment to the objectives to improve voluntary compliance, a major issue for success. Need to shift from active opposition or passive support to active support.

The experience of RACs was diversily appreciated. Where they helpful for design and implementation of recovery plans ? Need for an evaluation work accross Europe ?

Data gathering, comparative assessments and research in social, economics and governance of fisheries rebuilding beyond

UNCOVER :

The OECD initiative

The next calls of the 7th Framework Programme?