

“SAFMAMS”

Best practices for giving scientific advice to fisheries managers at the European, the regional and the sub-national level

In March 2001, the European Commission published, jointly with its report on the fisheries situation in the Community, a Green Paper on the Future of the Common Fisheries Policy (COM(2001)135), discussing the weaknesses and challenges facing the CFP and presenting a number of options for its reform.

This Paper argued that improvement in the state of many fish stocks was urgent and, in addition, expressed the concern that stakeholders did not feel sufficiently involved in some important aspects of the policy measures, causing a lack of involvement that undermined support for and compliance with the conservation measures adopted.



KOSTER-VÅRDERÖFJORD (SWEDEN), ONE OF THE LOCAL LEVEL CASE STUDIES OF SAFMAMS.
SOURCE: TROELS HEGLAND, IFM.

A fundamental part of the Commission’s response to this situation was to create **Regional Advisory Council (RACs)** that would facilitate stakeholder involvement in management at a sub-European (regional and local) level where two or more member states share a particular body of water. The RACs prepare recommendations and suggestions on fisheries aspects in the area they cover and transmit them to the Commission or to the relevant national authorities. Currently, four RACs have been created (i.e. the North Sea, the North-western waters, the Baltic and the Pelagic Stocks RACs), and three more are in the process of development (the Mediterranean Sea, distant waters and South-western waters). The legal foundation for these RACs has been laid down in Council Decision 2004/585/EC.

It is within this framework that in 2005 the **SAFMAMS** project was launched with the objective **to draw insights from existing research projects and management processes on the most useful forms of scientific advice for marine environmental management and to communicate those insights to scientists and decision makers.**

From that time on, the project has been looking to identify best practices for providing and using

scientific advice for **fisheries management** at three levels:

- The European level, where advice is provided by ICES, and more in particular the Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM), and reviewed by the Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)
- The level of shared regional seas, where RACs represent the stakeholder advisory structures
- The sub-national level, in relation to cooperative fisheries management programmes

For each of these levels, results of research projects, most of which have been funded under the EU’s Fifth and Sixth Framework programmes, and other literature sources have been reviewed for their implications on the various forms of scientific advice and collated into three documents:

- A review of the literature on the science-policy interface in international environmental management
- Review of science and stakeholder involvement in the production of management advice
- Review of the role of science in cooperative fisheries management

Project acronym:

SAFMAMS

Full title of Project:

Scientific advice for fisheries management at multiple scales

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www.ifm.dk/safmams

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To ensure stakeholder interaction, project partners have closely been following the scientific and technical advisory process at all levels by attending meetings of the ACFM and STECF at the European level, and by interviewing officials of the institutions involved at all three levels, so as to receive their opinion on the reviews produced. In addition, seven workshops have been/are being organised.



A STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP WAS HELD IN
JÄRNÖ MARINE BIOLOGICAL STATION
(SWEDEN). SOURCE: TROELS HEGLAND, IFM.

Based on the outcomes of the project, three policy briefs will be prepared for policy and decision makers and a book will be written, targeted towards scientists and scholars of science and society. Moreover, the lessons drawn from stakeholder involvement in the fisheries sector will be broadened to the entire marine environmental management sector. To this extent, a “**Catalogue of Marine Environmental Management Efforts in Northern Europe**” has been built, which is essentially a database containing information on groups involved in fisheries

and marine environmental management in the North- and the Baltic Sea (e.g. regional governments, marine conservation NGOs ...). The catalogue can be consulted through the SAFMAMS website, and organisations interested in being included in the database can fill out a questionnaire. Within the project, the data will be used for network creation and to identify stakeholders for a last workshop taking place in October 2007, bringing together scientists and other users to discuss different forms of scientific advice and ways of improving these.

With the present crisis in fisheries and the inability of conventional scientific models to cope with this, there is a need for a **greater emphasis on teamwork**. The crucial role of science in this regard is to provide **transparency**, i.e. rendering explicit how different conclusions have been reached. As to other stakeholders, participation is occurring, but not much is known about what the outcomes of this will be. Their involvement – and notably of the fishermen – is however highly encouraged, as they possess a lot of experience-based knowledge about natural and technical systems. Moreover, the eventual effectiveness of fisheries policy is strongly influenced by fishermen’s attitudes and cooperation.

**“RESULTS OF RESEARCH
PROJECTS AND OTHER
LITERATURE SOURCES HAVE
BEEN REVIEWED FOR THEIR
IMPLICATIONS ON THE
VARIOUS FORMS OF
SCIENTIFIC ADVICE”**