

PAN-AFRICAN FISHERIES  
AND AQUACULTURE POLICY FRAMEWORK  
AND REFORM STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTING REFORMS

A CASE FOR EFFECTING  
REFORMS AT FISHERIES LEVEL



AFRICAN UNION  
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU  
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES





## Executive Summary



Africa possesses important natural capital in the form of its fish and aquatic resources. In order to realize its full potential, reform is required in the overall policy and governance framework with practical implementation of this reform at the fishery level.



African States have deployed considerable efforts in developing their fisheries policies and sectors over the past couple of decades. The results have not met expectations for many reasons, but the critical general issue is that countries have not addressed fisheries management successfully at the fishery level.



In most cases, reform is best implemented gradually, fishery by fishery, by using a fishery management plan process based on fishery management units which are defined in terms of the resource (or set of resources) and the type(s) of fishing together with the spatial dimension.



A generic approach needs to begin with a participatory diagnosis; then needs to undertake some bio economic modelling, agree on broad management goals, and establish a rights regime with an allocation mechanism and functional rules. The resulting plan will require a number of supporting instruments, including appropriate sanctions and a fish stock assessment.

NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources 2016, *The Pan-African Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy Framework and Reform Strategy: Implementing Reforms, A Case for Effecting Reforms at Fisheries Level*, NPCA, AU-IBAR, Midrand, South Africa.

ISBN: 978-0-9946903-8-8

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# Introduction and Background

Policy Briefs Number 1 and 2 show that Africa possesses important natural capital in the form of its fish and aquatic resources and discusses the potential benefits available from their exploitation. However, in order to fully realize this potential, reform is required in the overall policy and governance framework.

The practical implementation of this reform will take place at the fishery level. Accordingly, this Policy Brief discusses the interventions needed at this level.

# Problem Statement

African States have deployed considerable efforts in developing their fisheries policies and sectors over the past couple of decades but the results have not met expectations. The available data suggest that problems of overfishing and overcapacity are worsening. Many of the most valuable fish stocks are now severely overexploited. This situation may be further aggravated by uncertainties related to climate change impacts (see policy brief on climate change and disaster risks).

Although reasons for this situation probably vary from place to place, a review of fisheries management in the Southwest Indian Ocean<sup>1</sup> identified the following reasons for deficient management (Box 1).



Whilst these problems are important and are generic in nature, there is another issue that must be addressed. In many cases, countries have not addressed fisheries management successfully at the fishery level. This policy brief suggests how this deficiency may be addressed.

One possibility would be to adopt a “big bang” approach with a single major reform of the whole fisheries sector. There are a number of

1 Cunningham and Bodiguel. 2005. In De Young. 2006. FAO FTP No 488.

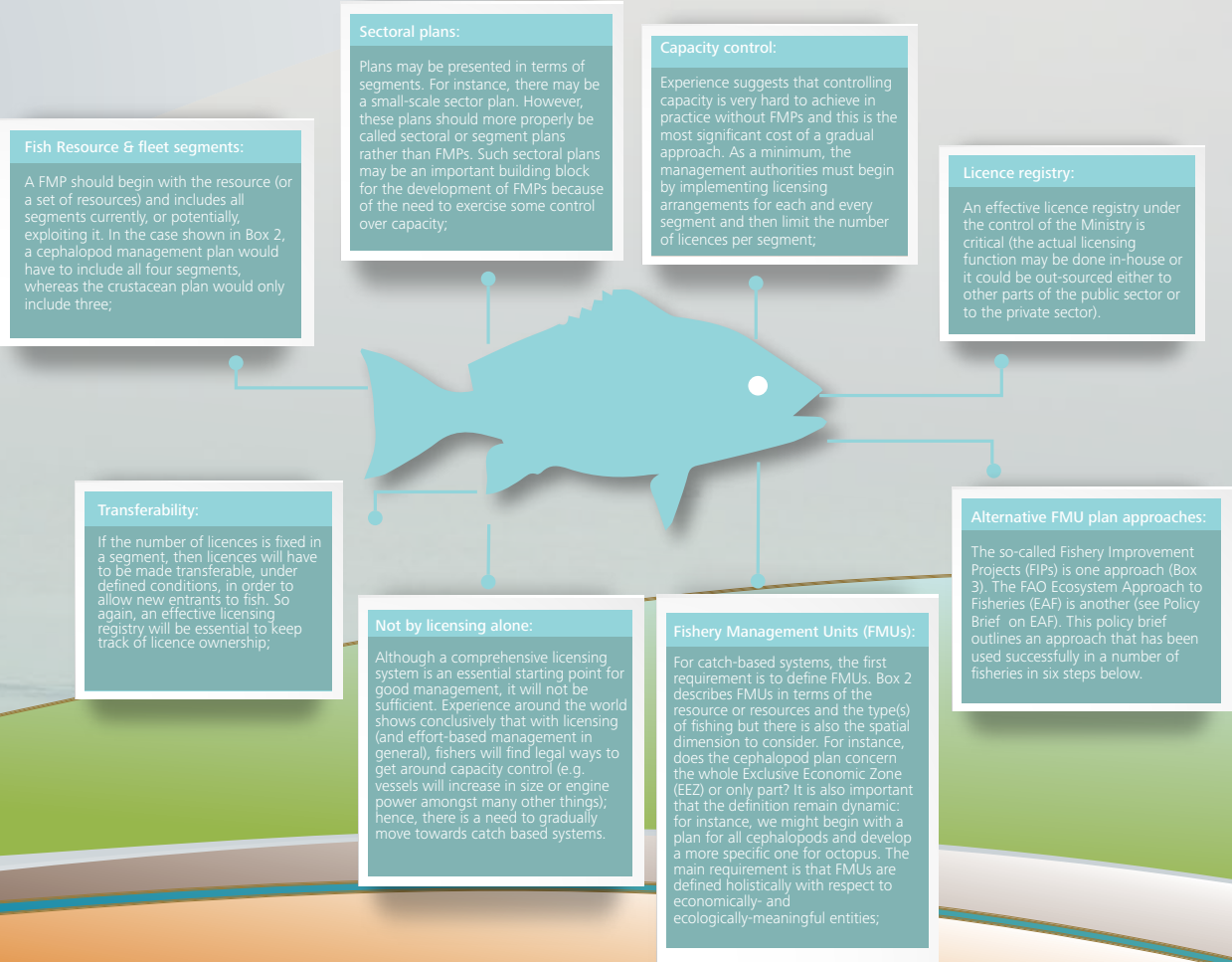
drawbacks with such an approach. First, it would greatly reduce the possibility of learning-by-doing. Second, most countries do not have the necessary financial, human or infrastructure capacity for such an approach. This brief suggests a gradual approach on a fishery-by-fishery basis.

# Approaches and Results

The key instrument in successful fisheries management is a broadly agreed Fishery Management Plan (FMP). FMPs are a useful aid to good governance because they help to ensure transparency in the management process. Before looking at how an FMP may be developed, consider Box 2 which shows the typical relationship between segments and resources.

Box 2: Fishery segments and fish resources – an example				
Resources	Segment	Cephalopods	Crustaceans	Demersal fish
Artisanal		X	X	X
Semi-industrial		X	X	X
Industrial		X	X	X
Foreign		X		

What elements should be considered in developing a FMP?



Box 3: Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIP)

FIP follow a similar process to that suggested here. They aim to be a way for stakeholders within a fishery to engage in dialogue and agree on future actions with others that share a common interest in a productive marine eco-system. The organization of FIPs is highly flexible but the key elements are common to all – the creation and use of reliable data, the rigorous identification of challenges and strict prioritization of tasks along with comprehensive reporting. For some examples of FIPs around the world, see:

<http://www.sustainablefish.org/main/fishery+improvement+partnerships>

6-Step Approach for developing a Fisheries Management Plan

Step 1. Participatory diagnosis:

Examine the existing situation in the FMU and its trajectory (if nothing is done). A good way to do this is for stakeholders to prepare situation papers around four themes: eco-biology and stock assessment (what are the most important resources in the FMU and what is their state), exploitation arrangements (which segments are involved and to what extent), post-harvest (what are the products and into which markets are they sold), and management measures (what measures have been taken and why).

Step 2: Ensure stakeholder participation:

The reform will require buy-in from those concerned to be successful and this is built through their involvement in establishing the diagnosis and by considering the following steps in the process discussed below. Multi-stakeholder efforts are required for successful reform outcomes and these should involve the whole value chain (see policy brief on food security) from both men and women, and by applying gender analysis and mainstreaming (see policy brief on gender).

Step 3. Bio-economic modelling:

Once agreement has been reached on the current situation, some bio economic modelling is necessary to evaluate the potential impact of management systems and measures. The models do not have to be highly sophisticated. The types of model will depend on resource and exploitation types as well as on data availability. But such models are crucial because they allow stakeholders to understand the driving role played by fish resource wealth in determining both exploitation levels and the potential payoff to different strategies for the fishery. They greatly aid transparency and enable understanding and debate of the main issues.

Step 4. Set management objectives:

Using the results of the diagnosis and modelling and drawing on national fisheries policy, precise management objectives will have to be set for the fishery. There are many choices for developing plans, so the remainder of this brief provides broad guidance on these.

Step 5: Determine rights regime:

There is increasing recognition that successful fisheries require that the private sector has secure use rights. However, there are many forms that such rights can take; there is no “one size fits all”. A key issue to consider, however, is the potential impact of the rights on fish resource wealth and vice versa. The private sector plays the key role in generating the wealth and it will be important, therefore, that rights create the correct incentives.

Step 6. Design and establish allocation mechanism:

It will be necessary to identify who will be the rights-holders within the FMU and how the initial set of rights will be allocated. Rules must then be established on the use of the rights, including provisions for their transfer and renewal (if they are not perpetual). Clarity will also be needed on the responsibilities that go with the rights and, in particular, on how the wealth benefits will be shared between public and private sectors.

- 1 Sanctions will have to be determined for non-compliance with the FMP;
- 2 The state of the resource must be assessed and provide advice on the sustainable catch opportunities in the coming period (depending on FMP);
- 3 A catch registry function must be developed to record catch, if possible at fisher level. Such a requirement is consistent with the increasing demand from the market for traceability of fish products;
- 4 A system of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) consistent with the measures adopted in the plan and dimensioned according to the value of the fishery is also needed. As a rule of thumb, such a system should not cost more than 5% of the turnover of the fishery;
- 5 Achieving social goals may also be important. In particular, are such goals best achieved through the activity of fishing (e.g. by increasing fishing employment) or through the results of fishing (e.g. by re-distributing the wealth generated);
- 6 Use rights can be a powerful tool to enable the realisation of such social goals through restrictions that can be placed upon them. For instance, it is relatively easy to favour small-scale fishers by requiring that the owner of the use right must be on board a vessel for it to be allowed to fish;
- 7 Communities rather individuals may be allocated rights and/or to require that certain fishing rights can only be exploited from certain fishing ports and the catch must be landed there. A broader solution is to give communities income shares from the exploitation of fish resources (as has been done in the case of Maori in New Zealand).

The procedure outlined above has been used to develop management plans in a number of fisheries as illustrated by the case study of Senegal (Box 5)

Box 5: Case-study: the Senegalese deep-water shrimp fishery

The plan which has now been adopted as a Decree by the Government revolves around the granting of an exclusive concessionary right to a group (effectively a producer organisation) involving all fishing companies in the fishery. The plan devolves much management responsibility to this group, subject to Government oversight against published standards, especially for fish stock size. Modelling of the fishery suggests that resource rents of at least seven million EUR per annum could be generated by the fishery under improved exploitation arrangements. The plan proposes that this wealth be shared between the Government and the concession holder.

# Policy Options and Recommendations

In order to implement reform and secure future benefits from African fishery resources, action is required at several different levels – from national policy to fishery specific plans. While the reform process can be described as a sequence, it should however be understood that successful fisheries management is a continuous process of policy development, implementation, enforcement and cooperation.

The previous section outlines a generic approach. It is recommended to adopt this but its practical implementation requires that it be adapted to the specific circumstances of each fishery.

Capacity building and institutional development will be key components of the support needed for successful reform, in particular, when it devolves responsibilities to fishery actors. Such support is required in both the public and the private sectors.

Where overexploited stocks are concerned, time will be necessary for the stock to rebuild and it will be important therefore to consider arrangements for the transitional period. A reduction in fishing effort will be needed. This may reduce the number of sustainable fishing jobs that the fishery can support but this depends on how fishing effort is reduced. Where job numbers do fall, consideration must be given to alternative employment and livelihood opportunities.

Governments need to be aware of the likely time and cost of the transition phase and compare this with the pay-off from improved exploitation arrangements in the fishery. These costs and benefits can be presented as an investment proposal to the Finance Ministry and other funding agencies.

The FMP approach allows other important policy issues to be addressed in a manner that is consistent with the bioecology of the nation’s fish resources. For instance, the development of spatial management measures such as territorial use rights and/or marine protected areas must be related to particular fish resources. Otherwise, the risk is to create a series of transboundary fisheries problems within the EEZ, thus removing a significant advantage of the latter. And where a State is negotiating a Foreign Fishing Agreement (FFA), establishing resource access within the framework of an FMP will help avoid overfishing risks.

# Conclusions / Implications

A fishery management plan is a useful tool but to be successful, the key issue is to define how it is developed and what it contains. This policy brief outlines key requirements in terms of participation and focus.

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2016, Policy Brief #4  
ISBN: 978-0-9946903-8-8  
Policy Brief 4: NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources 2016, *The Pan-African Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy Framework and Reform Strategy: Implementing Reforms, A Case for Effecting Reforms at Fisheries Level*, NPCA, AU-IBAR, Midrand, South Africa.  
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This policy brief was supported through funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through the NEPAD FAO Fisheries Programme (NFFP) and European Union through the Fishery Governance Project (FishGov).

