



Too Big to Ignore & the 65th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) Conference

A summary report¹

Introduction

The *Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI)* promotes information exchange on marine resources use and management through the organization of an annual meeting devoted to technical presentations and workshops on issues relevant to marine resources in the Gulf and Caribbean region. In 2012, the *GCFI* annual meeting was held from the 5th to the 9th of November in Santa Marta, Colombia. This event, hosted by the “Instituto de investigacion y evaluacion ecologica pesqueria”, Universidad del Magdalena, and supported by the “Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible” and FAO among others, was attended by 260 international and 130 national participants. Dr. Ratana Chuenpagdee opened the meeting with a keynote speech titled “How big is small? Understanding small-scale fisheries for what they are,” highlighting TBTI and its goals. She also presented the TBTI poster at the poster session and participated in the socio-economic café, organized by Patrick McConney (WG4 leader) which included Silvia Salas (LAC regional coordinator). Two TBTI events were also organized during the *GCFI* meeting:

- 1) An open session to engage and inform people interested in the project (November 6th, 2012) (see participants list in Appendix I);
- 2) A LAC and WG4 TBTI member/partner session to discuss research priorities and plan activities for this pairing (November 7th, 2012) (see participants list in Appendix II).

The summary below captures key points presented and/or discussed at the two meetings.

¹ Prepared by Ratana Chuenpagdee and Beatrice Frank, based on the meeting notes taken by Bertha Simmons.

TBTI LAC-WG4 Open session summary

The session was organized by Patrick McConney and Silvia Salas, and participated by Ratana Chuenpagdee. Three presentations were made to introduce TBTI, LAC and WG4, followed by an open discussion.

Discussion summary: The need to better define the *TBTI* partnership, to establish common principle, set rules and create a different ethical relationship with SSF was discussed by the participants. It was noted, however, that a standardization, despite useful, might not be feasible or desirable. Research findings, governments' agenda and policies might clash in regard to SSF and fisheries impacts. Thus, trying to align everyone to the same standards might not be possible. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that people may contribute to the partnership at different levels or while working at their own area/topic of interest. Listing a broad array of issues and approaches relevant to the region was suggested as a way to encompass the work priorities and ideas of different countries and people.

To understand if participants could contribute to the partnership with case studies on stewardship, WGL4 invited attendant to describe their work if aligned with the questions identified for the pairing. The following research activities were reported by participants:

- Tyler Pavlowitch: his dissertation focus on building fishing scenarios to model fishing impacts in the Dominican Republic;
- Martha Prada: they have developed a monitoring system to collect and analyze data jointly with fisherfolks in the San Andres archipelago. Their recommendations to the local government are taken into account since based on a broad participatory representation;
- Rodrigo P. Medeiros: the network 'transformar', which he belongs to, is working on 18 case studies whose focus span from artisanal fisheries, to SSF, to MPA, etc.;
- Sara Bonilla: they are working with fishermen to monitor fishery at landing sites.
- Will Heyman: he suggested the creation of bathymetric maps by using traditional and scientific knowledge, fishing aggregation, participatory monitoring and mapping.

A form was circulated during the open session to gather information about participants' research/work focus and possible contributions to WG4 and LAC (see Appendix III). This tool was also used to explore existing research and identify key issues of SSF in LAC.

It was agreed that more effective fisherfolk involvement in research and decision-making processes was needed. Participants identified the following constraints in implementing fisher engagement:

- 1) records about fisheries are often targeted at the industrial sector, ignoring the role of SSF on a global scale;
- 2) scientific findings are difficult to be understood by fishers since they are written in a complex language. Specifically, a common comprehensive language is not used to share knowledge between different stakeholders;
- 3) fishers do not have funding to participate in meetings, workshops and other activities tailored to influence the fishery industry;

- 4) the language spoken at public gatherings might be different from the one used by local fishers (e.g., English vs. Spanish).

GCFI members highlighted how fisherfolk engagement was promoted in their conference. For example, local fishers were invited to participate in the meeting, taking part in a forum and possibly be appointed with an award. Participants of the conference had also the opportunity to visit a local fisher community, activity that promoted interactions between researchers and fishers. To foster fisherfolk involvement in the LAC region, Silvia Salas reported that the LAC region has started a collaboration with OSPESCA, a Central American inter-governmental organisation engaged in information sharing through the creation of a comprehensible manual on SSF.

At the meeting's conclusion, it was explained that LAC and WG4 will prepare and present a book volume on the lessons learned on SSF in the LAC region at the 2nd World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress in Merida (2014). Thus, the participants of this open session could: 1) contribute to the volume with their case studies; 2) help identify what will be the core message to bring to the conference; and/or 3) be part of this network and spread the voice about the importance of SSF worldwide.

TBTI Member Only session

The meeting began with reflections from the participants about the open session meeting. Further discussion was around the role played by partners, collaborators and members of the project. This session ended with discussion about work plan and possible next steps for LAC and WG4.

General reflections and key points discussed

It seemed that participants of the open session, with different backgrounds and expertise (e.g., researchers, fishers, etc.), expressed their interest in getting involved in the TBTI partnership. Their main suggestion to the TBTI network was to develop collaborative processes to address key SSF issues in the LAC region. Participants also proposed to use bottom-up processes to address the concerns of stakeholders and implement local fisher engagement in SSF decision-making processes in the region.

A key topic discussed during the TBTI member-only session was the need to clarify the objectives of LAC and WG4, and the rationale for the pairing. Ratana explained that the pairing was made based on the shared interests, but stressed that other aspects relevant to LAC, but not covered in WG4, can also be covered in the LAC work plan. There is a need to make this point clear in the communication about the objectives of the LAC, which could be posted on the intranet site.

The question was raised on whether aquaculture was going to be a possible research theme in LAC. No decision about this topic was rendered during the closed session, but the general rule applies that SSF include marine/freshwater/brackish capture and culture.

GCFI reiterated their interest in the partnership with TBTI. It was suggested to use the next GCFI meeting (Texas, 2013) as a platform to promote the TBTI partnership and the 2WSFC in Merida, 2014. It was also underlined that pre-meetings were needed to engage people and develop scheme for the Merida congress and the GCFI meeting of 2014. Both events will represent unique opportunities to keep people engaged and to enhance SSF visibility worldwide. To avoid an overlap between these two events, it was suggested to organize the Merida congress in September of 2014.

Role of partners and member contributions

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), a non-official partner of TBTI, felt that their project “Building fisherfolk capacity to participate in governance” and the TBTI objectives were aligned. Based on this synergy, they wondered how to enhance the collaboration with the partnership. Participants also asked for clarifications about the difference between partners and collaborators. The project leader explained that no differences existed between members in regard to working purposes and acknowledgements. The only distinction between these two categories was that partners provided official documents to support the SSHRC application of the TBTI partnership. Being formal member, partners’ duty is to provide periodical reports to the organization and are expected to contribute in-kind and cash contribution. Collaborators, as informal members, are not required to supply such documents.

To enhance people’s ability to contribute to TBTI, it was suggested to map participants’ connections and communication networks. The seminar on bycatch reduction devices, Brazil, December 17 – 21, 2012, was proposed by Rodrigo P. Medeiros as a possible venue for networking. This meeting represents an opportunity to interact with ministries and further think about collaborations. Rodrigo P. Medeiros envisioned strengthening the collaboration with the partnership by modifying projects to better encompass TBTI ideas and by enrolling new students to do research related to SSF issues. It was pointed out that ongoing or existing researchers can also contribute to the partnership by sharing the lesson learned. For future projects, however, it is suggested to develop mechanism to involve TBTI RC and WG leaders early in the process.

It was inquired if Venezuela was being considered a possible case study area since this country has banned industrial trawling fishery. If so, participatory research was needed to include Trinidadian fishers while exploring the topic. Indeed, the latter perceive that piracy has increased in their water since the Venezuelan fishing ban. It was pointed out that LAC and WG4 are networking with as many countries as possible and are trying to involve people

via internet and meetings, such as the GCFI conference. This venue has represented an ideal platform to implement the visibility of the partnership in the region.

The WG4 leader invited members of the session to discuss which methods and approaches exist and should be considered while planning activities in the region. It was proposed to investigate which methods had been proven to be both practical and useful for people. To allow easy comparisons between different countries, tools used and accepted worldwide are needed. Denis Hellebrandt explained that at the University of East Anglia, UK, a research team is carrying out a literature review on evidences of SSF and poverty reduction. Topics such as trade effects on livelihoods, nutrition and food security, and possible alternatives to fishing activities are considered in the review. Also initiatives that showcase people working on poverty reduction and food security are included in the database. Denis Hellebrandt specified that this database, available in few weeks, could provide TBTI and its partners (e.g., FAO) with insights about existing methods, their effectiveness and impacts on the ground. GCFI is developing a database too. It was pointed out that this tool would be further discussed at a meeting in Isla Mujeres, Mexico in December. Comunidad y Biodiversidad, Mexico, is also willing to share their database with TBTI.

Communication strategies

To implement the partnership visibility and effectiveness, participants proposed to:

- 1) Use compelling networks, materials and tools to engage people, such as:
 - ✓ audio visuals, Facebook and videos to promote the organization;
 - ✓ cell phones to reach and keep in touch with fishers.
- 2) Look at successful outreach activities and programs, such as:
 - ✓ **GCFI Kids** is an initiative that engages sons of fishers in activities at school. The materials of this outreach program were requested by several organizations and the response was overwhelming. This was proposed as a possible way to disseminate information, start enhancing knowledge and validate fisherfolk activities;
 - ✓ **Fisheries ambassadors** was an initiative promoted by GCFI in collaboration with the Gladding Memorial Award. The source for this award was different every year.
- 3) Implement TBTI partnership communication and information sharing through the:
 - ✓ creation of a list of partners/collaborators and their activities/research;
 - ✓ set up a system (e.g., cloud, Dropbox) to share information. Such a tool would enable participants to start data collection and analysis.
 - ✓ organization of two virtual meetings per year through the Memorial University communication system.

Workplan LAC and WG4

Participants of the session were invited to contribute to the LAC and WG4 work plans by:

- ✓ sending inputs via email;
- ✓ suggesting case studies to be carried out by graduate student;
- ✓ defining how to prioritize case studies and graduate student work;
- ✓ working on the concept of indicators/standards for research;
- ✓ attending upcoming conferences and workshops (i.e. next GCFI) to spread the voice and organize a regional meeting.

Next steps

The WG4 leader will be attending several meetings in the near future, which he will showcase TBTI partnership. Raymon van Anrooy will follow up on the network on artisanal fisheries. Rodrigo P. Medeiros will possibly organize a meeting at the Uruguay Marine Science Conference to spread the voice about the TBTI partnership in the LAC region.

The need to plan regional meetings in Central and South America was underlined. To capitalize on resources and time, TBTI meetings should be mainly organized during meetings/conferences already attended by the members of the project. It was suggested to develop a strategic plan to determine how many meetings/congresses TBTI members, partners and collaborators should attend and where to showcase the network stories.

Other important activities, which can be jointly performed by LAC/WG4, are to:

1. edit a special issue in Portuguese on SSF;
2. recruit graduate students to work on TBTI case studies;
3. help increase TBTI visibility;
4. re-adapt existing research to fill the research gaps of the TBTI partnership;
5. find a way to implement knowledge sharing by connecting fisherfolk to experts.

Special Notice

In addition to the meeting and the social functions, Alejandro Acosta and Ratana Chuenpagdee gave an interview to the El Campustv, Universidad del Magdalena. The video of this interview is displayed on You Tube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Z59iwYDuAM8

Acknowledgments

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Appendix I: Participants of the open session

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Appendix II: Participants of the LAC and WG4 session

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Appendix III: Main themes and issues reported by participants of the open session (taken verbatim based on the notes submitted by the participants)

THEMES	ISSUES
Information & Integration	The information system of the <i>TBTI</i> partnership should use a hierarchical organization to assess the commonalities and idiosyncrasies of SSF across the world/region/etc. At the Dortmund College, USA, a team of researchers is creating a database on literature and case studies using such approach. Their method could be considered while designing the <i>TBTI</i> information system. Tyler Pavlowitch
	I work for CLS, subsidiary of the French Space Agency. We developed a specific terminal for SSF (internal battery, low cost). We are looking for fishing authorities willing to implement a pilot test to monitor their SSF through our device. Jordan Varagne
	We are using a new participative methodology in our research. We have obtained good results by including the opinions of various stockholders (i.e., fishermen, local leaders, experts, communities) in our study. Lina Saavedra
	Standardization of fishery information systems: we are interested to compare and improve the performance of the Sistema de Informacion Pesquera de INVEMAR (SSF information system of INVEMAR), which is used in Colombia for SSF monitoring. Mario Rueda
	We are using biological indicators and the best available information about fishing effort, gears and number of fishermen in the coastal areas. With this information we generate stock assessment that can help authorities to manage the resource. Ivan Velazquez
	SIMASTE – System of Sustainable Management of Fisheries: A case study could be the Archipiélago of San Andres, Providencia & Santa Catalina – RB systems. This good model could be improved, extended, tested and implemented/replicated in other places. Adriana Santos
	Another possible case study is the participative monitoring process involving 17 fishers' communities in the Pacific Coast of Colombia. Giovanni Melo
	High quality science needs to be collected through the <i>TBTI</i> project. Planning and a clear data collection strategy are needed to achieve this goal. Yvonne Sadovy
	There is a need to harmonize and standardize ways of collecting, recording and reporting fishery data. Such approach will enable to compare data among several countries. There is already an integrated fishery data-base named SIRPAC for Central America and the Dominican Republic. Jeannette Mateo
To influence policy development there is a need to generate political will. An implementation of the SSF guidelines and suggestions/approaches to support such implementation are needed. Raymon van Anrooy	
Economic issues, Valuation, Value change	Diversification options at the individual level? Joanna Pitt
	*We can share information about what is consider being a good and regular fishing haul for coastal fisherfolks of the Pacific and Caribbean area. Lina Saavedra

	<p>There is a need to identify economic indicators comparable among SSF. Mario Rueda</p>
	<p>Opportunities exist to increase value for SSF in supply chain. Premium markets for sustainable fisheries, such as local, export, should be taken into account. Larry Epstein</p>
	<p>We are designing a simple methods manual that enables inexpensive and easy data collection on fisheries. The outcomes of this tool will be useful, scientifically robust and will enable straightforward data collection. Yvonne Sadovy</p>
	<p>Region wide information are needed on economic valuation of fishery resources. Managers tend to focus on fisheries contribution to economy rather than on other indicators. A valuation of the economic values of mangroves in Samara Bay (Dominican Republic) and of landing sites for fishers is already available. Jeannette Mateo</p>
	<p>Small-scale aquaculture (e.g., family farming) can represent an important contribution to poverty alleviation and food security. FAO is currently carrying out research on this topic in Central America. Claudia Beltran and John Jorgensen are involved in such research. Raymon van Anrooy</p>
	<p>Despite I'm not personally engaged in the economic dimension of SSF, I am interested in this topic. Anonymous from St. Thomas Fisheries Association</p>
	<p>There is a program in the Pacific Coast of Colombia that link SSF with restaurants in the capital (Bogota). This program is about responsible fishing principles and prices. Giovanni Melo</p>

Livelihood & coastal management	* We can provide a description of livelihood conditions in 9 fishing communities located in the Colombian Caribbean and Pacific. Lina Saavedra
	*Socio economic transitions witting artisanal fishery / fishery anthropology, historical changes in fisherfolk social organization, agro-ecological perspectives on fisherfolks community. Ana Isabel Marquez
	Fishermen and local researchers should be trained in applying some kind of certification (good practices) Mario Rueda
	Poverty levels of fishing communities should be estimated and actions should be tailored to address such issue. Estimation of poverty has been made for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries – Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM). Jeannette Mateo
	It is important to consider zoning issues. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) could be assessed in the Caribbean. Raymon van Anrooy
	A marine spatial planning in the Pacific coast of Colombia should be carried out by mapping all possible SSF activities (i.e., tourism, industrial fishing, sport fishing). This approach would enable to identify conflicts and to suggest possible solutions. Giovanni Melo
Vulnerability & Changes	We can provide a study of changes in landings with different NAO/position of the gulf stream seven year cycle. Joanna Pitt
	* For nine fishing communities, we have an historical analysis of fishing activities (e.g., changes in fishing methods) at the resource level. Lina Saavedra
	It is important to consider the relation between socio-cultural change and eco-systemic, and between artisanal fishery and tourism. Socio-environmental conflicts over the use of resources and territories are another key topic. Ana Isabel Márquez Pérez
	Action plans on climate change adaptation should be develop in the Caribbean to enhance early response and contingency in coastal communities. Jeannette Mateo
	It is important to consider alternative livelihoods in coastal communities (e.g. effect of trade barriers and regulations on fishers' communities). Raymon van Anrooy
Gender, indigenous people	The indigenous participation in freshwater fisheries (e.g., reservoirs fisheries) should be evaluated. Ivan Velazquez
	Contribution of women to economy in fishing communities should be determined. The intrinsic value of their work for the well-being of their families should be investigated, not only their employment status. Jeannette Mateo

Fisher's knowledge, fisher's self organization strategies	*A description and analysis of the fishermen organizations, including their strength and weaknesses, is needed. Lina Saavedra
	*Traditional knowledge and fisheries management should be key themes. A dialogue between traditional, local and scientific knowledge should be started. Ana Isabel Márquez Pérez
	Incentives should be given to fishermen to allow them to get organized. Larry Epstein
	Fishers' knowledge should be integrated into fisheries management. In the Dominican Republic we are initiating an ethno-zoology study based on fisheries tradition believes and practices using marine fauna elements. We are just starting the co-management of fishery resources in fishing communities. Jeannette Mateo
	The Caribbean is a vast region with great habitat variations. The whole area cannot be managed under the same rules, i.e. the close season for queen conch in Puerto Rico has a different peak for its spawning season than others zones in the Caribbean. Andy Maldonado
	Fishers are represented in fishery management studies of by catch, stock assessment, fisheries operations by the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association (www.stfavi.org). Anonymous from St. Thomas Fisheries Association.
	We work with fishers communities in few fishing selectivity. Giovanni Melo
	There is a need to document success and failure stories on SSF organizations in the Caribbean and to share the lessons learned from them. Raymon van Anrooy
SSF & Ecosystems	*Historical perspectives on the relation between socio-cultural changes and eco-systemic changes in fisherfolks communities; artisanal fishers in conservation areas. Ana Isabel Márquez Pérez
	There is a need to develop technological innovations to reduce bycatch of artisanal fishing gears. Mario Rueda
	It is important to monitor the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), with an emphasis on SSF participation. Raymon van Anrooy
	The relation between SSF and mangroves ecosystem in the Pacific coast of Colombia should be better explored. Giovanni Melo

Policy	We are working on developing a better licensing system to encourage continuity on a limited entry fishery (i.e., tiers of licenses, ITQs/TACS, license transfer). Joanna Pitt
	*An analysis of rules has been suggested by fisherfolks and communities to evaluate their regulation. Lina Saavedra
	It is important to encompass the transition from open access to rights-based management policies and consider fishery concessions for SSF. Larry Epstein
	Fishery policy and strategies are needed and some countries are in the process of development/updating then (e.g., several Caribbean States, including the Dominican Republic, Dominica, and Bahamas). Jeannette Mateo
	The importation and commercialization of queen conch must be prohibited in the close season to prevent illegal fishing. Andy Maldonado
	Incentives should be provided to fishers to participate in lengthy policy formulation process. Such processes should be planned in a way to suit SSF participation. Raymon van Anrooy
Governance	The social-ecological systems governance analysis should be made more operational. We know a lot about the factors that influence sustainable resource management, but less about how to influence those factors in a system. Tyler Pavlowitch
	There is a need to create a system that enables representative of SSF to become part of large regional management bodies such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The cost of participation and lack of resources for compliance are a barrier to achieve this goal. Joanna Pitt
	*In a Colombian case study, governance was analyzed at a national level from a problems and solutions perspective. Lina Saavedra
	There is a clash in compatibility between fisheries territory user rights and no-take zones. The change in governance, and especially in Right-Based Management (RBM), often results in a change of fisheries and managers behaviours. Larry Epstein
	*There is a need to include research on industrial fishery since in most case the answer or solutions to the problems of artisanal fishery originate from there. Adriana Santos
	It would be useful to create a collection of success cases on rights-based fisheries management carried out by fishers in their communities. Attention should be given to dealing with migratory resources as often national governments are not capable to handle such issue. Raymon van Anrooy
	A program where local communities are helped in planning their SSF should be developed. Giovanni Melo
Statistics	There is a need to increase in a sustainable way the collaboration with SSF in regard to data collection and record keeping. Raymon van Anrooy

*These notes were translated from Spanish