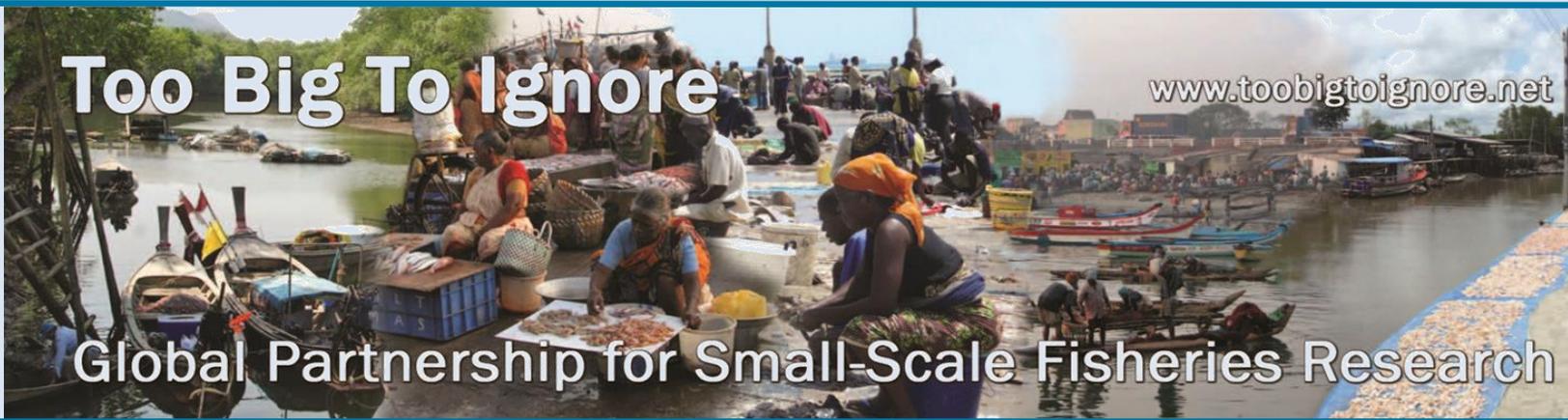


Too Big To Ignore Research Report

Number R-03/2016



## Stewardship in Small-Scale Fisheries Workshop

July 29-30, 2016  
St. John's, NL, Canada

toobigtoignore.net

RESEARCH

POLICY

MOBILIZATION

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- 1 **Summary**
- 2 **Workshop objectives**
- 2 **Why stewardship?**
- 3 **Why gear impact?**
- 4 **Stewardship activities – general discussion**
- 5 **Gear impacts – general discussion**
- 7 **Stewardship activities - group discussions**
- 8 **Gear impacts - group discussions**
- 11 **Next steps**
- 12 **Acknowledgements**
- 13 **Appendix I - List of participants**
- 15 **Appendix II - Workshop agenda**

## Summary

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The '*Stewardship in Small-Scale Fisheries*' workshop took place on July 29-30, 2016 in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. The workshop was organized by the SSF Stewardship research cluster of the Too Big To Ignore project (TBTI, [www.toobigtoignore.net](http://www.toobigtoignore.net)). TBTI is a global research network aiming to elevate the profile and importance of small-scale fisheries (SSF) around the world. The objective of the [SSF Stewardship cluster](#) is to create a global overview of small-scale fisheries' impacts on ecosystem, as well as to capture their contributions to conservation and stewardship. The current focus of the research cluster is on assessing impacts of small-scale fishing gear and the role that SSF communities play in the stewardship of fisheries resources and marine ecosystems.

The workshop was organised and facilitated by Mel Agapito, Delphine Rocklin, and Tara Whitty, SSF Stewardship cluster coordinators. It brought together 16 participants from Brazil, Canada, Eritrea, India, Japan, Mexico, USA, Thailand, and Turks and Caicos (see Appendix I). Prior to the workshop, the participants received questionnaires and rapid assessment templates with questions related to fishing gear and stewardship initiatives, which they were asked to complete ahead of time and send to the organizers. This information about the different case studies submitted by the participants provided the basis for the discussion at the workshop.

The workshop began with the participants sharing information about their own SSF case studies. The coordinators then presented the results of the preliminary analyses of the two rapid assessment surveys on SSF stewardship and the gear impacts of SSF. This was followed by facilitated discussion, both in plenary and in separate group, which allowed for a more in-depth, case-by-case discussion, of either topic (stewardship or gear). The data and insights collected through the rapid assessment surveys and during the workshop will be published as synthesis peer-reviewed papers and will be co-authored by all workshop participants.

## 1. Workshop objectives

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The *Stewardship in Small-Scale Fisheries* workshop provided a platform for sharing information about stewardship activities involving small-scale fishing people in various parts of the world. The workshop objectives were to: 1) to assess the ecological and social impacts of SSF fishing gears, and 2) highlight the main factors for successful stewardship activities in the context of SSF. The workshop agenda is shown in Appendix II.

Prior to the workshop, all participants completed two rapid assessment surveys, one focusing on ‘gears impact’ and the other on ‘stewardship activities’. In preparation for the workshop, the data from these surveys were analyzed and two working papers were drafted based on these results. The first paper, led by Mel Agapito, focuses on the relative impacts of various types of SSF fishing gear. Delphine Rocklin is leading the paper on the role of SSF communities in stewardship.

The workshop began with a short description of the main objectives. Then, each of the 16 participants provided a short, 3-minute overview of their case study. The full list of the participants can be found in Appendix A.

Tara Whitty and Mel Agapito, co-organizers of the workshop, gave two introductory talks on stewardship and gear impacts, laying down the foundation for subsequent discussions. In the second part of the workshop, the participants engaged in general discussions and brainstorming sessions on stewardship and gears in SSF, led by Delphine Rocklin and Mel Agapito respectively. The insights from these sessions were discussed during two break-out sessions. A summary of outputs and next steps were presented at the end of the workshop.

## 2a. Why stewardship?

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### Presented by Tara Whitty

During this presentation, Tara Whitty, one of the TBTI Stewardship Cluster coordinators, presented ‘stewardship’ as a valuable concept to evaluate and guide productive and sustainable relationships between SSF and conservation.

There are numerous efforts to promote stewardship in SSF, which can include, for instance, active participation and leadership in conservation. At the same time, there is not a well-developed definition or framework for evaluating stewardship in such a context. In order to optimize the effectiveness of stewardship initiatives, we need a clear definition and an appropriate analytical framework. Tara also described a wide variety of tools, which can help in improving stewardship, among which are fisheries control, protection and conservation, and community-based capacity development.

To help improve stewardship, it is necessary to promote ethics, build capacity, and implement actions. When it comes to stewardship in SSF, these are the research questions to keep in mind: “How is stewardship manifested?”, “is it effective?”, and “how do we promote it responsibly?”. The next challenge will be to decide which stewardship interventions should be implemented, where they should be implemented, and how they can be meaningfully implemented.

## 2b. Why gear impacts?

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### Presented by Mel Agapito

Mel Agapito, also part of the TBTI Stewardship Cluster coordination team, gave an introductory talk on the impact of gears in SSF stewardship. She emphasized that gears used in SSF can have collateral impacts, including bycatch and habitat damage that can adversely affect fisheries. The ecological impacts of gears remain to be a major issue not only in fisheries management but also in conservation.

The use of certain types of gears is not only ecological in nature but can also have social implications on local economies, food security, resilience, dependence, accountability, and access to resources. The social impacts of using ecologically low-impact SSF gears have not received much attention in the literature, despite the common knowledge that low impact gears contribute to the sustainability and well-being of fishing peoples.

The presentation, therefore, hinted that the gear impact paper would be in a better position if developed around the notion that gears are not equal. The next step is to explore this idea as a key element in fisheries management, and as an

alternative to spatial closure or access restriction. Consequently, it is important to identify low-impact gears in fisheries and to create a narrative about the ecological and social benefits of using them.

### 3a. Stewardship activities – general discussion

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#### Led by Delphine Rocklin

After Tara and Mel laid out the foundations of the workshop topics, Delphine Rocklin, another member of the TBTI Stewardship Cluster coordinating team, led a general discussion on ‘Stewardship in small-scale fisheries: A worldwide storytelling and key factors for success’. Delphine first presented an overview of the information participants provided about their case studies by completing the ‘Stewardship activities assessment survey’. The survey included questions about the types of stewardship activities implemented, who initiated them, the role of small-scale fishers in these activities, their impacts on SSF, the success of these activities, and the issues that can counteract the implementation of stewardship activities. The data provided by participants indicate that fisheries management measures are the most commonly applied stewardship activities in SSF, while workshops or trainings events are less commonly used. The activities may be initiated only by one group of stakeholders, generally by the government or the fishers, or by a group of stakeholders through a collaborative approach, which may include NGOs or scientists. In a few cases, fishers were leading these activities. Although fishers sometimes take an active role in these processes, more often, their role is limited to participating in the activities. Except in two cases, these stewardship activities were considered to have a positive impact on SSF communities.

Based on the survey analyses, Delphine highlighted some overarching questions:

- What is a success story?
- When can we consider that stewardship in SSF is a success?
- What are the factors of success?
- What results do we consider as successful?

When discussing these questions, the participants raised many points about what stewardship success means in SSF. It was said that success is not simply a

two-step event but a process in which factors such as compliance, interactions, collective action, sense of ownership, and adaptiveness must be considered. In addition to considering the factors of success, participants suggested that it is important to recognize that success is not static, but a dynamic process and that the definition of success may change over time and space. Success varies from person to person and from one place to another. In addition, success in one area may have unintended consequences on another. As such, it is also crucial to consider the context in which SSF occur. In terms of stewardship, success may mean very different things to different small-scale fishers and fisheries, or to a particular project. All these points were considered as factors for the evaluation of the success of the SSF stewardship activities. They were collected in a table and given to the participants on the second day of the workshop so that they could provide an expert evaluation of their own case study.

### **3b. Gear impacts – general discussion**

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#### **Led by Melinda Agapito**

In the presentation, Melinda emphasized that low-impact fishing would have a positive impact on biological conservation and in wellbeing of fishing community as a whole.

Melinda started her presentation with a review of current knowledge and research on gear impacts, especially the varying ecological impacts associated with commonly used fishing gears. She pointed out that gears cause collateral impacts such as bycatch and habitat damage that threatens the sustainability of fisheries. Along these lines, it was suggested that the gear impact paper could look into exploring the unequal ecological impacts of fishing gears as a concept for designing conservation alternatives. Melinda then went on to discuss some of the social benefits associated with using low-impact gears based on the rapid assessments surveys submitted by the workshop participants. The information from these surveys indicates that the associated social benefits, if identifiable, are a good addition to discussing the value of relatively low impact gears within the context of stewardship and conservation.

Below is the key message for the gear impact paper:

*“The use of low-impact fishing gears by small-scale fishers contributes to the sustainability and wellbeing of fishing people. Incorporation of fishing gear impacts as a key element in fisheries management and conservation presents an excellent alternative to spatial closure or access restriction.”*

The following questions were suggested to guide the drafting of the narratives.

- What is the proportion of SSF using low-impact gears relative to the total number of fishers?
- What are the SSF fishing gear(s) that could be of interest for the gear impact paper and why?
- What are the known ecological impacts of these fishing gears?
- Who uses these gears, how many people depend on them, for how long, and how have they changed over time?
- What are the identifiable social and economic benefits of using the SSF gear(s) of interest?
- What is the purpose of supporting SSF low-impact fishing?
- What are the measure(s) being taken to mitigate bycatch/habitat impacts?
- How successful have these measures been in mitigating the impact?

Additional suggestions for the narrative:

Discuss the social, political, and economic conditions (e.g. effort, marginalization, subsidy) that influence the use and ecological impacts gears as this can provide a richer context. For example, we can convey the following thought: In India, the use of bag nets is considered a fishing gear with low ecological impact. However, due to increasing effort and poor management, the bag net fishery is contributing to the decline of the target species.

## 4a. Stewardship activities – group discussions

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### Led by Delphine Rocklin

In order to continue the work initiated during the ‘Stewardship activities – general discussion’, and to evaluate the success of their case study stewardship activities, the participants were divided into three groups, according to the perceived level of the stewardship success in their case study. This allowed the participants to discuss the common factors for success or failure of their specific stewardship activities. The ‘not successful/low successful’ group included five participants, the ‘medium successful’ group had six participants, and the ‘very successful’ group had five participants.

In the ‘not successful/low successful’ group, the participants pointed that, in general, the stewardship process follows a top-down approach controlled by governments. In such cases, even if fishers’ compliance with the rules is generally high, such conditions are not considered as a win-win scenario for either decision-makers or affected stakeholders. There is a low sense of ownership, which could be due to a lack of engagement of the fishers, but also could be a consequence of a low level of collaboration or a low level of stakeholder engagement by authorities. This group also underlined that the lack of hope among fishers could lead to a sense of apathy about stewardship, and that there is a real need to break this cycle of negativity. However, this is not always easy to achieve, due to the social, cultural, economic, and political context of the fishers’ location.

In the ‘moderately successful’ group it appeared that, although the stewardship process is mainly characterized by top-down management, fishers are engaged in the decisions and collaboration is encouraged, resulting in co-management systems. In some cases, stewardship activities are still in the early stages, and participants felt that, while their implementation is perceived positively, their success cannot be assessed at this time.

In the ‘highly successful’ group it was observed that the stewardship objectives were clearly assessed as successful and the level of collaboration between all stakeholders is very strong. Fishers are included in the decision-making process, or in some cases they are the ones who initiated the stewardship activities. In these cases, fishers also have a great sense of ownership. In such cases,

stewardship activities are recognized as successful, leading to positive social, economic and ecological outcomes.

## 4b. Gear impact – group discussions

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### Led by Melinda Agapito

The participants were split into three groups to discuss and brainstorm: (1) whether the participants, based on their on-the-ground experience, can contribute a narrative to support the key message, and (2) whether the three options (see below) could be used as a possible structure of the journal article.

#### *Option 1*

*Three or four compelling narratives (each gear impact story is specific to one location);*

#### *Option 2*

*Narrative by gear category (cluster of similar gears or similar impacts involving multiple locations);*

#### *Option 3*

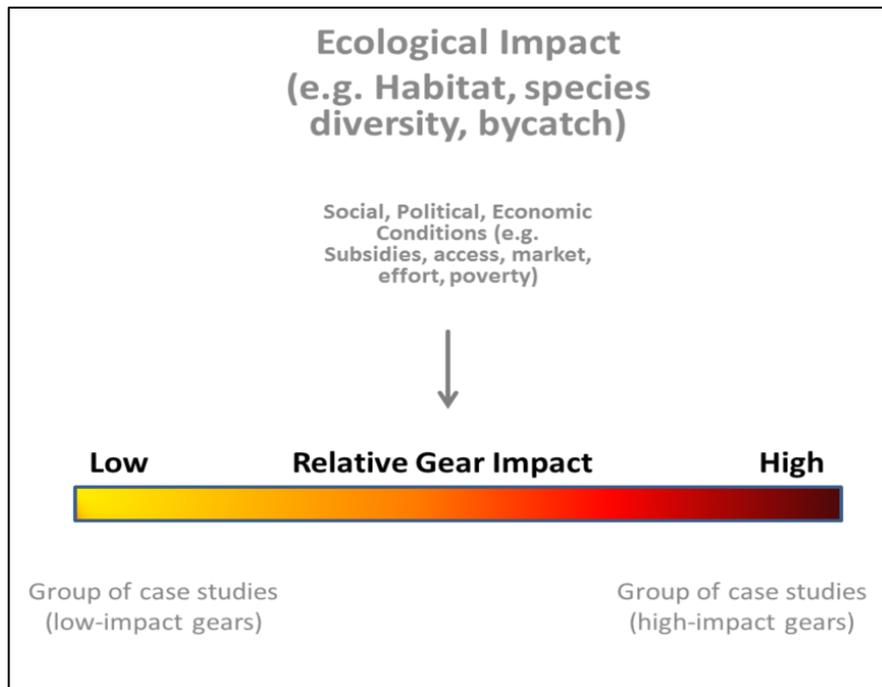
*Combination of Options 1 and 2*

Workshop participants confirmed that they have local cases to support the key message and agreed that putting together stories using Option 3 is a suitable approach for the journal article. With the use of Option 3, the paper can begin by providing an overall picture of gear impacts, and then substantiate this with a section that includes compelling local cases. This will help clarify the advantage of using one gear type over another.

The workshop participants also suggested that when drafting the narratives, we might consider adding the social, economic, and political conditions that can further influence the use of gears (see Figure 1 below). It was also suggested that the paper could be structured into high-impact versus low-impact gears to emphasize the benefits of low-impact fishing and the unintended consequences of high-impact fishing as also shown in Figure 1.

Below are some additional points and thoughts discussed by the participants:

- Think carefully about how we should describe social benefits alongside the different levels of ecological impacts. For example, if a large-scale fishery is engaged in high-impact fishing, its social implications might be difficult to compare with the social impact resulting from low-impact fishing, especially if the period of observation is relatively short.
- In some cases, comparing SSF and large-scale fisheries (LSF) is easy (e.g., small-scale and large-scale lobster fisheries in Mexico use a different type of gear). In other situations, though, certain kinds of complexity might be involved in comparing LSF vs. SSF. For example, in Newfoundland, the use of gears is species-based where SSF and LSF (if defined by vessel length) use the same types of gear.
- Participants confirmed that their case study could provide a narrative supporting the social benefits for using low-impact gears. These social benefits include boosting the local economy, improving food security, supporting the resilience of fishing communities, and ensuring fair access to resources. They agreed that these could add value in discussing the relative ecological impacts of gears.
- Keep in mind that SSF are not necessarily low-impact fisheries. In Turks and Caicos, small-scale fishing is still bringing down the population of target species such as grouper.
- Include in the narratives the conditions in which fishing gears are socially beneficial (or at least not socially harmful). Focusing on social impacts is the best way to show that SSF can be sustainable in a holistic manner.
- Taking into considerations the social, political, and economic conditions that influence the use of gears can add a realistic picture about the complexity of on-the-ground gear stories.
- Consider depth and distance from the coast as factors that may affect the use of gears and the ecological and social impacts.
- Instead of comparing LSF and SSF, compare communities that have banned certain gears with communities who are continuously using these gears.
- Consider comparing and grouping gears by ecosystem type as some gears could only vary in mesh size.



**Figure 1** Impacts of fishing gears on ecosystem may vary; some social, economic, and political conditions may also add to the nature of use of fishing gears.

## 7. Next steps

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The next steps involve preparing two articles for journal publication.

*Stewardship paper* will focus on the stewardship activities in SSF around the world. Its goal is to evaluate factors that should be considered for depicting a success story about stewardship in SSF. The paper also aims to present a road map for SSF stakeholders, by proposing successful stewardship activities within the context of SSF.

*Gear impact paper* will provide examples of local case studies, which support the idea that not all gears are equal in terms of their impact, and that ecologically low-impact gear types contribute to the sustainability of SSF. The article will also argue that low-impact fishing can present an excellent alternative to spatial closure or access restrictions.

## 8. Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank all participants for their active contribution to this workshop and for providing many insightful ideas. We also thank the very effective note-takers Bonnie Bishop, Tyler Engert, Tara Whitty, and Willow Moore, who helped record all these elements. A big thank you goes to two TBTI members, Manuel Muntoni and Miguel Lorenzi, for all of their help with the workshop logistics.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix I – List of participants

Name	Affiliation	Country
Mel Agapito	Memorial University of Newfoundland	Canada
Nathan Bennett	University of British Columbia	Canada
Bonnie Bishop	Memorial University	Canada
Rajib Biswal	University of Manitoba	Canada
Marta C. Calosso	Turks & Caicos Islands Government	Turks & Caicos Islands
John A.B. Claydon	Department of Environment & Coastal Resources, Turks & Caicos Islands Government	Turks & Caicos Islands
Rachel Donkerlsoot	Alaska Marine Conservation Council	U.S.
Karina Dracott	University of Akureyri, Iceland	Canada/U.S.
Tyler Engert	Memorial University	Canada
Elena Marie Finkbeiner	Stanford University	U.S.
Vesna Kerezi	Memorial University	Canada
Mirella Leis	Memorial University	Canada/Brazil
Delphine Rocklin	Memorial University	Canada
Tara Whitty	Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California	U.S.
Nadia T. Rubio-Cisneros	Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados (CINVESTAV), Unidad Merida	Mexico
Willow Moore	Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association	U.S.
Kimberly Olson	Memorial University	Canada
Alicia Saldaña-Millán	Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados del IPN (CINVESTAV-Merida)	Mexico
Tetsu Sato	Research Institute for Humanity and Nature	Japan
Wichin Suebpala	Chulalongkorn University	Thailand
Winta Tesfai	York University	Canada
Daniele Vila Nova	Independent contractor at "Projecto Babitonga ativa"	Brazil

## Appendix B – Workshop agenda

Agenda	
Day 1, Friday 29 July 2016	
08:00-08:45	<i>Arrival and light breakfast</i>
08:45-09:50	Welcome, roundtable introduction and workshop objectives
09:50-10:15	Introductory talk: Why stewardship? By Tara Whitty
10:15-10:40	Introductory talk: Why gear impact? By Mel Agapito
10:40-11:00	<i>Refreshment break</i>
11:00-12:30	Discussion about 'Stewardship Paper' Led by Delphine Rocklin
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch and TBTI/ISSF Demo</i>
13:30-15:00	Discussion about 'Gear Paper' Led by Mel Agapito
15:00-15:20	<i>Refreshment break</i>
15:20-17:30	Break-out Groups ( <i>gears</i> )
17:30-17:50	Quick report back from break-out group work
17:50-18:30	IMCC4 "stewardship and gear impact assessment" survey
18:30-...	<i>Dinner (at MUN)</i>
Day 2, Saturday 30 July 2016	
08:00-08:30	<i>Arrival and light breakfast</i>
08:30-10:25	Break-out groups ( <i>stewardship activities</i> )
10:25-10:45	Quick report back from break-out group work
10:45-11:15	Summary and next steps
11:15-11:50	<i>Lunch</i>
11:50	End of the workshop

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