



**Assessment of needs of fisherfolk organisations in the Caribbean
March 2014**

Prepared by

CANARI



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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Method	1
3	Key findings	2
3.1	Types of organisations	2
3.2	Internal governance	2
3.2.1	Participation in fisherfolk organisations	2
3.2.2	Financial management and fund raising	3
3.2.3	Communication and awareness	3
3.2.4	Strategic plans	3
3.2.5	Capacity building of members	3
3.3	Relationships	4
4	Key needs	4
5	Conclusion and recommendations	4
6	Bibliography	4
	Appendix 1	6
	Appendix 2	8

1 INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) was the recent recipient of an European Union (EU) grant for the project *Enhancing food security from the fisheries sector in the Caribbean: Building the capacity of regional and national fisherfolk organisation networks to participate in fisheries governance and management*. Its goal is to improve the contribution of the small scale fisheries sector to food security in the Caribbean islands through building the capacity of regional and national fisherfolk organisation networks to participate in fisheries governance and management. The project countries are Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Turks and Caicos Islands. The four year project commenced in 2013 and will end in 2016.

The expected results include:

- strengthened capacity of the regional Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) to effectively represent its members to bring the voice of fisherfolk into regional fisheries governance and management policy and planning processes
- strengthened capacity of national fisherfolk organisations (NFOs), their network of primary organisations and individual leaders (in at least 8 project countries) to effectively network and communicate to influence policy on fisheries governance at the national and regional levels to improve food security;
- enhanced collaborative development and joint communication of key policy messages by fisherfolk at multiple levels to policy makers; and
- improved participation of fisherfolk in national and regional processes for decision-making in governance and management of Caribbean fisheries.

Several activities are planned in this project including annual action learning group meetings for each year of the project and a small grant component that will specifically target gaps in the fisherfolk organisations. The needs assessment was the first activity in the project. It was intended to understand the current needs of the NFOs in the region as well as the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) to guide the development of the project and to understand the critical areas that should be addressed.

2 METHOD

A survey form was used as an informal guide for this needs assessment. The survey examined governance issues within the NFOs in the project countries and the regional CNFO (see Appendix 2). Information was gathered between February and August 2013 through telephone conversations and personal contact in meetings attended by the project participating countries. Literature reviews were also conducted over the same period. Representatives from five NFOs answered the survey form- Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago and Montserrat. A CNFO representative also answered a survey form about the regional organisation. Representatives from six other participating countries were asked some of the questions from the survey form during a meeting in Guyana in February 2013. These countries were Barbados, Guyana, Suriname, Grenada, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The findings of the needs assessment was validated at the first action learning group (ALG) meeting in August 2013 in Trinidad and Tobago.

3 KEY FINDINGS

3.1 *Types of organisations*

Some of the countries have national fisherfolk organisations. These include Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Belize and Dominica. The NFOs are normally amalgamations of the local fisherfolk organisations. The participating countries without NFOs include Turks and Caicos, Anguilla and Haiti. These organisations are either cooperatives or associations. Cooperatives were seen as ways to organise fisherfolk and to have fisherfolk view themselves as entrepreneurs (CRFM Secretariat 2004). Cooperatives are membership- based where members vote on the composition of the Board and the by-laws of the organisation. Cooperatives are subject to their countries' cooperatives laws that may include requirements such as regular financial audits. This holds true in countries such as Dominica, Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis. Other countries such as Antigua and Barbuda and Trinidad and Tobago have national organisations that are associations. These are less formal than the cooperatives with fewer legal requirements. This sometimes makes associations more attractive to fisherfolk in the region who have participated unsuccessfully in cooperatives in the past. Both cooperatives and associations have either Boards or board like structures that oversee the fisherfolk organisations. The CNFO has a coordinating unit.

All the national organisations interviewed were legally registered with a government entity in their country. The CNFO is still seeking legal registration but it is recognised by the Caribbean as the regional voice of the fisherfolk.

3.2 *Internal governance*

3.2.1 *Participation in fisherfolk organisations*

Not all fisherfolk are part of organised structures at either the local or the national level. Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago for example have both reported long histories with fisherfolk organisations. Both representatives pointed out that fisherfolk in their countries do not always want to be part of organisations because they have not worked in the past. In both countries, there have been claims of misappropriated funds and misrepresentation of the organisations by representatives that have made the prospect of joining them unattractive.

Within the organisations, there are few core members who undertake most activities. These are persons who either have dominant personalities or are or asked to do so because of disinterest from the majority of members. Fisherfolk do not always want to participate in meetings because these are activities that can detract from earning an income. There is also the perception that those who participate in meetings and workshops may not always share the information they receive with their colleagues upon their return. Fisherfolk are most active in organisations when there are burning issues that affect a large proportion of the fisherfolk population such as the potential threat posed by seismic surveys to fishing off the coast of Trinidad in November 2013 (Boodram 2013).

Representatives in all the countries surveyed reported that the benefits of organisations are recognised. Fisherfolk however, do not always relate active participation to the strength of organisations nor do

they correlate having strong organisations to influencing policy and to personal income-earning potential.

3.2.2 Financial management and fund raising

Most of the funds for fisherfolk organisations are raised through tournaments and other events and membership fees. Some organisations like the Jamaica Fisherman Cooperative Union sell and repair equipment to earn income. All the organisations surveyed have financial procedures, most of them documented. There is still a perception in some countries that funds are not managed appropriately; they have asked for greater accountability within the organisations (CANARI 2013). Montserrat also sometimes receives subventions from the government. All the representatives interviewed said that they needed more funds to carry out their activities.

Because the CNFO is not legally registered in any country, at the time of the interviews, the regional organisation used accounts of member NFOs such as Barbados as conduits for funds.

3.2.3 Communication and awareness

Internally, members communicate via e-mails, meetings, text messages, phone calls, flyers and notices on boards. Externally, some groups use wider media such as television, radio and meetings. The CNFO also has a region-wide Yahoo group to share information with persons willing to join the group. Of the organisations interviewed, only the CNFO had a communication strategy that set out targets and objectives of its communication.

It is unclear if communication is effective. The representative interviewed from Montserrat was not aware of the existence of the CNFO. In Trinidad and Tobago, the President of a local fisherfolk organisation was not aware of the existence of the national fisherfolk organisation.

3.2.4 Strategic plans

Although all the organisations interviewed had constitutions, not all had current strategic plans. Jamaica's national fisherfolk organisation, for example, had a strategic plan that was determined by its members. A strategic plan that articulated a shared vision and mission can guide the development and activities of an organisation. It has been noted that members of fisherfolk groups do not always share the outlook for their organisations. A strategic plan can assist in this regard.

3.2.5 Capacity building of members

One of the needs expressed by all the representatives of national organisations interviewed was for increased technical capacity (e.g. fishing techniques). There is also need for improved capacity to manage and participate in fisherfolk organisations. There is the perception that literacy and numeracy skills are still low among fisherfolk. This may prevent effective participation within the organisations.

Discussions with participants during the meeting in Guyana in February 2013 revealed that although there is an awareness of policies at the regional and national levels, the fisherfolk do not always connect their needs to those policies. Capacity to connect the regional policies to the national policies is also limited. (CRFM 2013)

3.3 Relationships

In many countries the national organisations are made up of the primary organisations. It is intended that there is feedback between the two levels of organisations. Some have reported that the needs of the primary organisations are not represented at the national level while information at the national level is not always taken back to the primary organisations.

The organisations interviewed reported good relationships with their fisheries authorities. Relationships with other organisations may not be as cordial. In St. Kitts and Nevis the representative of the national fisherfolk organisation indicated that her organisation believed that the Cooperative Department was not providing the assistance it should.

Some organisations reported difficulty attracting new members and expressed concerns about aging membership. This is partly a symptom of poor relationships between existing fisherfolk organisations and those who are not members of those organisations.

4 KEY NEEDS

Several key needs were articulated during interviews and in the plenary of the August 2013 meeting. These were:

- Increased participation and membership within fisherfolk organisations-
- Improved technical capacity e.g. skills to capture fish
- Access to equipment needed for fishing e.g. nets
- Financial sustainability of the organisations
- Improved status of the fishing industry. Fishers are seen as uneducated and not respected

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The needs of the fisherfolk in the region are varied. This project is designed to help build fisherfolk's capacity to participate effectively in policy in the region. One of the areas that continues to present a challenge to fisherfolk is connecting their challenges to the food security and related fisheries policies at the national and the regional levels. There are also challenges connecting the regional policies to the national policies. It is recommended that in all the activities the project attempt to link challenges and needs to regional and national policies.

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APPENDIX 1

Persons completing surveys

Last name	First name	Organisation	Country	Telephone	E-mail
Nicholls	Vernel	Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organziations (BARNUFO)	Barbados	246-426-5189 / 246-268-7168	vernel.Nicholls@gmail.com barnufo@caribsurf.com
Vidal	Huron	National Association of Fisherfolk Cooperatives (NAFCOOP)	Dominica	767 245 3737	huronfvidal@yahoo.com
Gill	Desmond	St. John's Fishermen's Association	Grenada	473-420-6735 / 473-440-3814	fisheries@gov.gd
Moti	Yuri	Upper Corentyne Fishermen's Co-operative Society	Guyana	592-338-2328 / 592-338-2338	yuri_moti1978@yhao.com
White	Glaston	Jamaica Fishermen's Cooperative Union Limited	Jamaica	876 357 9613	wglaston@yahoo.com ifcu@ja-fishermen.com
Romeo	Julian	Montserrat Fishermen's Coop	Montserrat	664 491 4844 (t); 664 495 4844 (c)	julianromeo63@yahoo.com

Polius	Petronila	Fisheries Extension Officer Department of Fisheries	Saint Lucia	758-468-4143	petronila.polius@govt.lc
Warner	Lorna	St. Kitts and Nevis National Fisherfolk Organisation	St. Kitts and Nevis	869 664 3324	
Ramcharran	Khamraj	Visser Collective	Suriname	597-894-3882 597-711-5274	vis-col@hotmail.com
Lee Quay	Joslyn	Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO)	Trinidad and Tobago	868 374 7520	joslee_56@outlook.com
Serrant	Marcus	Trinidad and Tobago Unified Fisherfolk Organisation (TTUF)	Trinidad and Tobago	868 728 4068	MARCUS_Serrant@Live.com

APPENDIX 2

The survey form

Needs assessment

Section 1: Organisational capacity to operate as effective and sustainable organisations

Ranking:

0 = not at all

1 = somewhat but poor

2 = okay/good/adequate

3 = excellent

	INTERNAL GOVERNANCE		Answer	Notes/comments
	Does the organisation have a Board?	Yes/No		
	How well does the Board perform its functions (oversight of financial management, strategic guidance, fundraising, public relations, etc.)?	rank 0-3		
	Who is the President of the national organisation?			
	Who is the Secretary of the national organisation?			
	Who is the Treasurer of the national organisation?			
	Is the Board regularly changed through a voting process by members?	Yes/No		
	Does the organisation have a mission and vision determined by members?	Yes/No		
	How many active members does the organisation have?	Give number		
	How much do members have a say in what the organisation does?	rank 0-3		
	How involved are the members in implementing the work of the organisation? (attending meetings, etc.)	rank 0-3		

	INTERNAL GOVERNANCE		Answer	Notes/comments
	Are minutes taken of meetings of the organisation?	Yes/No		
	Does the organisation have staff?	Yes/No		
	If the answer to Question 9 is yes, how many members of staff are there?	Give number		
	Does the organisation have written policies and procedures for managing staff?	Yes/No		
	Does the organisation have a bank account?	Yes/No		
	Does the organisation have financial policies and procedures? (authorising signatures, etc.)	Yes/No		
	Does the organisation prepare and use budgets?	Yes/No		
	How much money did the organisation spend in the last year?	Amount		
	Does the organisation value the financial contribution of its members and keep records of this?	Yes/No		
	What are the sources of income? (grants from donors, members fees, subvention from government, corporate sponsorship, other donations)	List		
	Does the organisation submit regular financial reports to the Board and members?	Yes/No		
	Has the organisation ever had an independent audit of its accounts?	Yes/No		
	Does the organisation have a current strategic plan determined by members? (defined goals / what it wants to do)	Yes/No		
	How well is the organisation performing in terms of achievement of its goals?	rank 0-3		
	Does the organisation regularly report on its work and achievements?	Yes/No		
	Does the organisation have a positive working relationship with key government agencies?	Yes/No and examples		
	Does the organisation have linkages with other key stakeholders from civil society, private sector, others? Give examples.	Yes/No and examples		
	How does the organisation communicate about its work and issues it is concerned about? (e.g. media, meetings, etc.)	List		

	INTERNAL GOVERNANCE		Answer	Notes/comments
	Does the organisation keep records that are accessible to all members?	Yes/No		
	In your opinion, what are the 3 biggest needs of your organisation in order to be strong and effective?	List		

Section 2: Performance of the desired network functions

Functions of primary fisherfolk organisations (PFOs)

3. Are all the PFOs in your country members of the national fisherfolk organisation (NFO)?

4. How are members of the NFO chosen?

5. Are PFOs consulted by their NFO representatives on issues to be dealt with at the national level?

6. Do PFOs convey their concerns and recommend issues to the NFO?)

6b. Do PFOs demand feedback from their NFO representatives after meetings?

7. Do NFO representatives report back consistently to their PFOs?

8. Does your organisation have relationships with other PFOs in your country?

9. Give examples of collaboration, if any

10. To your knowledge, do PFOs have relationships with other PFOs in other countries in the Caribbean?

Y

N

11. Give examples of collaboration, if any

Functions of national fisherfolk organisations (NFOs)

1. Is the NFO legally registered in your country? Yes/No

2. Does the NFO represent the PFOs in governance issues at the national level Yes/No

3. Does the NFO have strong relationships with the PFOs in your country?

0 1 2 3

4. Does the NFO have strong operational linkages with the National Fisheries Authority?

0 1 2 3

5. Does the NFO have strong structural linkages with the National Fisheries Authority?

0 1 2 3

6. Does the NFO provide feedback to the PFOs?

Explain _____

7. Does the NFO have linkages with other NFOs in the region?

0 1 2 3

Explain _____

8. Does the NFO have strong linkages with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)?

0 1 2 3

Explain _____

9. What are the other types of organisations with which the NFO has linkages?

Research institutions 0 1 2 3

Example _____

Donor organisation 0 1 2 3

Example _____

NGOs 0 1 2 3

Example _____

Any other

Example and rank

10. Does the NFO assist with capacity building for the PFOs in your country?

Explain _____

11. Does the NFO assist with conflict management among the PFOs in your country?

Explain _____

12. Does the NFO demand feedback from the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisation (CNFO) that represents the organisation in regional issues?

Explain _____

13. Does the CNFO report to the NFO consistently?

Explain _____

14. Do the NFOs have any other functions?

Explain _____

Functions of the regional network CNFO

1. Are there NFOs in all CARIFORUM states? Yes/No

2. Are all NFOs in the CARIFORUM also members of the CNFO?

Explain _____

3. How are representatives of the CNFO chosen?

4. How does the CNFO meet with its membership?

Virtually _____
In-person _____
Other _____
[Specify] _____

5. How often do CNFO members meet?

6. Do NFOs demand feedback from their CNFO representatives?

Explain _____

7. Does the CNFO have legal standing in countries of operation?

Explain _____

8. Do the CNFO representatives report consistently to the NFOs?

Explain _____

9. Does the CNFO have strong relationships with

Research institutions	0	1	2	3
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Examples _____

Donor agencies	0	1	2	3
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Examples _____

NGOs	0	1	2	3
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Examples _____

Other regional fisherfolk organisations	0	1	2	3
---	---	---	---	---

Examples _____

CRFM	0	1	2	3
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Example _____
