

# LESSONS LEARNT

## COMMUNITY BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (CBFM) IN VIETNAM



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The integrated local government institutions in Vietnam helps to bring all stakeholders together to establish and strengthen community based institutions and leverage effective management of the fisheries resources.

- Integrated nature of the local government institutions in Vietnam brings stakeholders from the Provincial to the grass roots level together to be involved with the activities of the waterbody management committee (a Community Based Organisation - CBO).
- The village and hamlet leaders play as catalyst to get approval of the CBO decisions on institutional, financial and fisheries management matters from the District Peoples Committee to provide legal basis.
- The local government institutions leverage effective enforcement of fisheries management principles and support services from different organs of the government at District and Provincial level.
- Village and hamlet leaders are involved in identifying the project beneficiaries, mitigating conflicts, overseeing CBO election process and all other decisions made by the CBOs.



Project sponsored motivation and awareness raising activities complemented by the active support of the local government, the community at large and the government agencies contributed to achieve higher level of compliances in establishing fisheries management principles.



- The CBO established two fish sanctuaries by excavating parts of river bed, constructing dykes of the river, accumulating tree branches and water hyacinth to create better environment for aquatic habitats, and planting trees along the dykes of the sanctuary to control soil erosion with the support from the local government and spontaneous participation of the beneficiaries and community.
- The CBO posted billboards to deliver CBFM messages and to seek community's cooperation in enforcing fisheries management principles such as use of destructive gears and techniques.
- Project beneficiaries and the community observe fishing ban in the sanctuaries and follow gear restrictions. The community also stopped few incidences of non-compliance during past years by outsiders.
- Active support of the village/hamlet leaders and the community at large contributed significantly towards achieving this higher level of compliances.
- District Peoples' Committee, CBO, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Can The University (CTU) jointly organized workshops and meetings to raise awareness about government fisheries laws and regulations, and different measures of environmentally safe and sustainable fisheries management.
- They are also using print and electronic media to disseminate the importance of fisheries management and abiding fisheries laws and the regulations, and by-laws of the CBO. They also distribute posters and leaflets published by the Ministry of Fisheries and Provincial government.

To implement fishing ban periods access to credit is considered necessary for alternative income generating activities (AIGA). However, although the project sponsored micro-credit program was generally unsuccessful, compliance was good with concomitant increases in fish production.

- Although demand for credit among the project beneficiaries and the community is very high due to seasonal nature of farming and fishing, project provided credit took too long to start, was insufficient in volume and the number of recipients was too few to make any substantial livelihood impact for the CBO as a whole.
- Overall credit recovery was poor partly because of lack of supervision and partly because of losses incurred. The credit program is channeled through the bank that has little interest and no experience of supervising micro credit, and it may be noted that the bank administered a small amount of credit provided by the project (i.e. it was not their money). The perceived transaction cost was deemed to be too high.
- Furthermore bank transaction for the rural cooperatives or associations is generally either not allowed or the banking institutions are not familiar with such activities. Consequently, the

CBO is unable to generate capital through savings from the members as they do not have any trusted place to operate such capital.

- Although overall recovery was poor, small loans taken out by women were all repaid but for larger loans to men not yet repaid largely due to failed pig rearing projects.



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### Introduction of CBFM approaches has created substantial impact on fish production and income of the beneficiary households

- Project monitoring data is inconclusive but indicates that on the average per household fish catch increased by more than four times during lean season and more than eight times during peak months.
- More than 90% of the participants in the focus group discussions (FGD) strongly believe that fish production and species diversity increased. Discussion results revealed that fisher households on the average catch 3-4 kg per day during lean time and 15-20 kg per day during peak time.
- The majority (70%) of the participants also believe that their income have increased due to project interventions. On the average, per day income is 20 thousand VND from fishing.

CBFM provides a platform for both the CBO and the government agencies to communicate with each other. Government agencies are able to reach out to the larger community through the CBO to deliver their messages and services, and the CBO can communicate their needs to the local government authority and government agencies.

- Members of the community experienced increased level of interactions with different local government and national institutions that led to greater access to services from different government agencies.
- The government departments use the CBO as the primary contact point to reach out to the larger community for delivering their key messages and services.
- The CBO in collaboration with the village leaders facilitates trainings on preventive health measures and demonstration on safe drinking water to the community conducted by DARD. The CBO invited agricultural department and chemical companies to discuss preventive measures of crop damage by insects.
- The CBO established links with DOF to get awareness materials about the harmful effect of poisonous chemicals and gears on fisheries resources.
- The CBO pursued local government to construct a bridge on a canal that flows through the hamlet. Local government also contributed to buy land to construct a community center for the CBO. Beneficiaries provided manual labor required to fill the land and the project provided fund for the building construction.



Continuous interactions and lesson sharing sessions of the CBO leaders convinced the Provincial DARD officials to include CBFM as a model to expand other sites in An Giang Province.



- The CBO organized round table discussions on fisheries protection and management as part of dissemination of the project results and goals with the Provincial top policy makers. These events are also broadcasted in the Provincial TV network that has enormous impact within the Province.
- Leaders of the CBO and hamlets regularly attend the district level coordination meetings chaired by the Chairman of the District Peoples' Committee.
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) of An Giang Province highlighted the success of the CBFM approach as a model to mobilize communities to protect, conserve and manage fishery.
- They expressed their commitment to expand the CBFM approach in two additional sites in An Giang Province as part 4 years' (2006-2010) strategic national plan of protection and development of fisheries resources,

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