

# STREAM Policy Brief



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## Number 2

### Summary

**What is this about?** Analyzing and supporting people whose livelihoods include fisheries and aquaculture.

### Read this if ...

.. you want to understand more about the objectives, vulnerabilities, resources and context in which people live.

### It involves:

- Accepting an increasingly important role for national fisheries administrations in poverty alleviation.
- Building capacity to understand livelihoods analysis and livelihoods approaches to development.
- Considering the choices that people make, the resources they can command and the circumstances in which they can be woven into supporting *livelihoods*.
- Basing Country-level Development Strategies (such as NSSDs, CDFs and PRSPs) on the livelihoods contexts of people for whom services and policy are built.
- Strengthening the links between the causes of poverty amongst farmers and fishers and subsequent policy responses.

Livelihoods analysis uses participatory tools, often applied by teams within communities.

Livelihoods analysis and approaches are flexible ways of working that explicitly put people, not aquatic resources management, at the center of agenda-setting.

We can translate learning about people's livelihoods into useful options for change and monitor and evaluate our efforts against poor people's objectives.

A briefing on ...

# Livelihoods Approaches in Fisheries and Aquaculture

... in two pages or less

**If you can only do one thing with this Policy Brief, do this ...**

**Build skills and design ways of working in organizations that give fisheries professionals the capacity to understand and support aquatic resources management in people's livelihoods, especially people with limited resources**

### The briefing ...

Delivering good policies and services that effectively support people's objectives depends on many, sometimes conflicting, agenda's. Three very important components are: the capacity to analyze and understand people's livelihoods, the consideration of national perspectives, and of initiatives by the international community, which increasingly call for Country-level Development Strategies.

- In Asia Pacific, national government support to aquatic resources management has tended to focus mainly on research and technology development. However, as we accept **an increasingly important role for national fisheries administrations in poverty alleviation**, we need to understand the role for fisheries in poor people's livelihoods.
- To do this, **capacity must be built to understand livelihoods analysis and livelihoods approaches** to development.
- *Livelihoods analysis* is a **systematic yet flexible approach to understanding**, situations, access to resources, vulnerabilities, options and choices, which makes use of participatory approaches for learning from individuals and groups within communities. It is not complex but often involves people taking on roles that may be new to them.
- Taking a *livelihoods approach* involves considering the **choices that people make, the resources they can command and the circumstances in which they can be woven into supporting livelihoods**. It means explicitly putting people, not aquatic resources management, at the center of agenda-setting.
- It is helpful to broaden our **focus onto aquatic resources management**, instead of aquaculture or fisheries or farming, because this helps us to avoid constraining our agenda to one sub-sector, when we know that people's lives are complex. We know well that those who are vulnerable rationally choose mixed assortments of livelihoods options, which may include many interlinked activities associated with aquatic resources management, such as farming, fishing, aquaculture, laboring, manufacturing and the supply of services.

→ Many people in fisheries administrations are technically trained but **may need capacity building support** to undertake livelihoods analysis and to implement livelihoods approaches.

## A briefing on ... livelihoods approaches

- Livelihoods approaches are about **developing a deep understanding**, putting people at the center of development and sharing rich information with others about people interacting with their resources.
- Taking a Livelihoods Approach helps us to recognize and renegotiate unbalanced power relations, to try not to capture just one (dominant) view but a range of views and to **ensure that people's knowledge and understanding shapes agendas, timeframes, budgets and ways of working**.
- Two possible outcomes of increased use of livelihoods approaches in the fisheries sector would be: to **strengthen the links between the causes of poverty amongst farmers and fishers and subsequent policy responses** and to **highlight more clearly the huge role which aquatic resources plays in the livelihoods of poor people**.
- Through the use of livelihoods approaches we can **translate learning about people's livelihoods into useful options for change** and monitor and evaluate our efforts against poor people's objectives.
- If livelihoods approaches can be useful to improve the delivery of local services and policy developments they can also **contribute to the broader national picture** too, and have an important role to play in building Country-level Development Strategies (such as NSSDs, CDFs and PRSPs – see box below).

### *International obligations and livelihoods approaches:*

- Agenda 21, the action plan of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, calls for countries to draw up National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD), to ensure economic, environmental and social sustainability.
- The World Bank encourages Comprehensive Development Frameworks (CDFs).
- The World Bank and the IMF use Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as a means for linking debt relief with poverty reduction outcomes (now the centrepiece for policy dialogue in all countries receiving concessional loans from the Bank and IMF).
- NSSDs, CDFs and PRSPs are each versions of a Country-level Development Strategy involving livelihoods approaches.
- In Asia Pacific aquatic resources management in poor people's livelihoods should play a key role in Country-level Development Strategies.

### **Links to other documents and information sources on this topic:**

- An 18 page guidance note on comparing development approaches from the UK Department for International Development [http://www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance\\_sheets\\_pdfs/section6.pdf](http://www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance_sheets_pdfs/section6.pdf)
- A 4-page Better-practice Guideline on Livelihoods Approaches – Capacity-building and Analysis <http://www.streaminitiative.org/Library/bpg/index.html>
- Livelihoods and Fisheries in the Lower Mekong Basin: Understanding the concept of livelihoods approaches. Mekong Development Series No. 5 <http://www.streaminitiative.org/Library/pdf/pdf-india/FisheriesLivelihoodsStudy.pdf>

### **Where has this come from?**

The Policy Brief series is prepared by the Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management (STREAM) Initiative of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA).

Policy Brief 2 follows Policy Brief 1, which is about agreeing policy change and involving people. It draws on experiences from the FAO Technical Cooperation Project 'Assistance in Poverty Alleviation through Improved Aquatic Resources Management in Asia-Pacific', of sharing understanding of livelihoods analysis and livelihoods approaches.

For more information see [www.streaminitiative.org/Library/India/india.html](http://www.streaminitiative.org/Library/India/india.html) or contact

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