



Whole System in the Room Strategic Planning Retreat Summary

Tonle Sap Fishery, Cambodia

Background

The Global FISH Alliance (G-FISH) promotes sustainable fisheries and aquaculture practices through the application of a system-wide approach that balances economic, environmental, governmental, and social components essential to enhancing livelihoods and biodiversity. Supported by the U.S. Government and partners, G-FISH brings together government, private sector, and civil society to work collaboratively on specific fisheries around the world.

G-FISH empowers people to become the drivers of their own development process by strengthening their capacity for informed decision making and sustainable, collaborative action. Applying a systems approach to social change, the System-wide Collaborative Action for Livelihoods and the Environment (SCALE) communications-driven management approach results in greater impact at scale, creating social capital, strengthening governance, and increasing sustainable economic growth and livelihoods. The Global FISH Alliance initiated the SCALE process in Cambodia in June 2011 in conjunction with the German-funded STARGO project implemented by WorldFish Center. The first step in the SCALE process is to conduct multiple interviews with a wide range of stakeholders to identify key issues and major opinion leaders/change agents involved in the system (including fishers, civil society, government, and private sector). Key opinion leaders are invited to join an Advisory Group which drives the planning process from the start of the program.

The Advisory Group, comprised of key change agents, drives and owns the planning process. The Advisory Group identifies key organizations to include in the second step of the SCALE process, the Whole-System-in-the-Room (WSR) strategic planning retreat in which diverse stakeholders come together to establish common goals and collaborative work plans.

WSR Retreat At-A-Glance

The WSR took place in Siem Reap on September 13-16, 2011 for the Global FISH Alliance – Tonle Sap Initiative. The whole system was gathered under the theme *“Improving Livelihoods in Tonle Sap Lake Communities by Increasing Collaboration in Fisheries Resource Management and Governance.”* Eighty-seven participants were grouped into 10 stakeholder groups. These stakeholder groups represented:

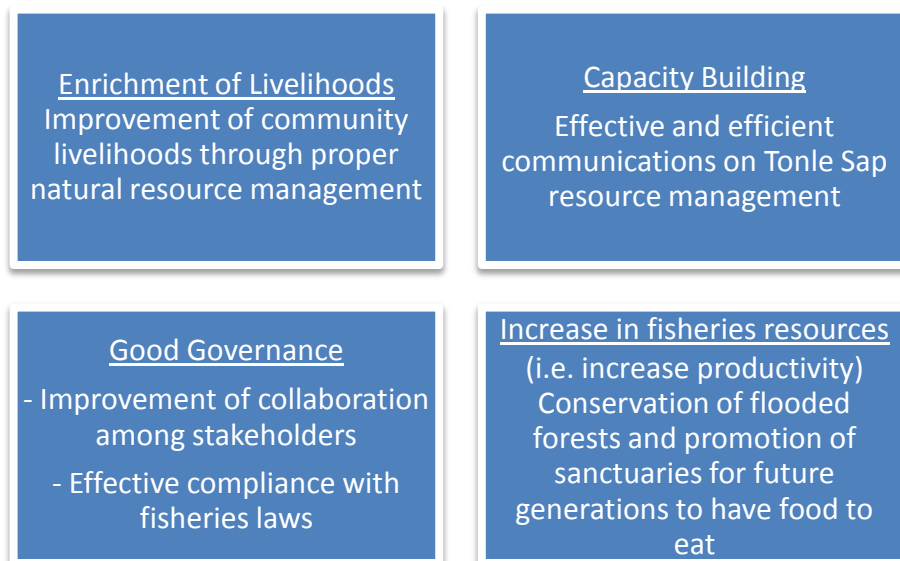
- Commune Leaders
- Researchers
- Private Sector
- Media
- NGOs
- Women’s Groups



- Fisheries Administration
- Coalition of Cambodia Fishers
- Government Enforcement Entities
- Observers

During the retreat, the participants went through eight self-guided exercises focused on building trust, connections, and communication skills between all retreat participants around a common vision for the Tonle Sap fishery. Over the course of the exercises, the participants used a democratic process to present ideas, work through challenges, and ultimately report to the group at large about the results of their small group discussions.

The retreat culminated with agreement by all participants on five common goals in four main categories.



Each of the 10 stakeholder groups jointly developed short-term (three months) and medium-term (three years) collaborative action plans. Next, voluntary Task Forces were formed to address the common goals agreed upon by the WSR participants. The Task Forces tackle discrete activities or work in focus areas to achieve the common goals. The Task Forces are as follows:

- Conservation of Inundated (Flooded) Forest Task Force (7 members)
- Fishing Lots Advisory Task Force (11 members)
- Improving Tonle Sap Livelihoods Task Force (7 members)
- Patrolling, Enforcement, and Regulation Task Force (9 members)
- Tonle Sap Fisheries Communication Task Force (11 members)
- Tonle Sap Sanctuaries Task Force (8 members)

These Task Forces will be the main organizing entities to promote and lead collaboration among stakeholders. G-FISH will work to support the Task Forces in the coming months.

G-FISH Next Steps

The Global FISH Alliance will focus on communication and collaboration support for the Task Forces organized at the WSR event. G-FISH, through our Communications and Networking Facilitator, Bunny Yorth, will convene meetings, support transportation, and promote continued collaboration with all Task Forces. In particular, there will be an initial focus on developing short-term plans to move forward on key issues related to the Task Force topic with commitments to action by the members of the group. Initial task force meetings have been organized for early October. In addition, a full WSR report will be disseminated to WSR participants and other interested parties. This report will outline the event, its outcomes, and the commitments of the each stakeholder group.

KEY OUTCOMES

- A locally-driven and owned process was established through the **SCALE process** from the start of the activity. Key opinion leaders and change agents from within the community were identified and invited to join the **Advisory Group**, allowing for actions to be catalyzed from within the system; key actors were identified from producers (fishers), civil society, private sector, and government. The Advisory Group has representatives from: Fisheries Administration, Community Fishery, WorldFish Center, Coalition of Cambodia Fishers, Cambodia Peace Network, Cambodia Development Research Institute, Culture and Environment Preservation Association, Cambodian Organization For Women Support (COWS), Learning Institute, Wildlife Conservation Society, and Royal University of Agriculture.
- Through the WSR, the various stakeholders shared their perspectives, expanded and strengthened relationships, agreed upon common goals, and developed collaborative work plans towards those goals. (See WSR participant list):
 - In his opening comments, the **Director General of the Fisheries Administration encouraged everyone to openly participate** in the discussions and stated that this would be a different type of workshop. He pointed out, for example, that he was sharing the stage with a representative of the WorldFish Center and a representative of the Advisory Group, rather than USAID or the local governor.
 - All the participants openly engaged in discussions throughout the workshop. Participants called for **more transparent and accountable governance**.
- Illustrative examples of activities from the collaborative work plans include:
 - Women groups want to **expand access to financial services** for saving and lending.
 - NGOs plan to **expand marketing services for locally produced products** (such as fish paste), provide technical services (such as training in animal husbandry/chicken and vegetable farming), **assist in replanting of flooded forests**, and conserving fish sanctuaries.
 - Fishers called for enhancing fisheries productivity through greater protection of flooded forests, replanting of flooded forests, and **increasing the use of sanctuaries**.
 - Media will enhance accountability while maintaining confidentiality of sources, **broadcast fishery laws and best practices through TV and radio**, and invite fish authorities and other speakers to participate in shows.
 - Enforcement entities will **protect the flooded forest and fish in sanctuaries**.
 - Commune Leaders called for **increased education and training on fishery laws**, participation in patrolling and enforcement with FiA, improved fishery processing, and provide assistance on identifying markets for products.
 - Private sector representatives want to help establish more fish sanctuaries and replant flooded forests, **improve fish processing**, improve patrolling, and participate in extension of fishery laws.
 - The Research representatives want to help in **information exchange, collection, and dissemination**; provide training to fishery communities and to media; conduct research on factors that encourage members to participate in best fishing practices and community management; and **identify options for the 35 fish lots suspended** by the FiA and most effective management approaches.
- A total of **53 participants volunteered** to serve on the Task Forces. **Six Task Forces** were established to focus on key issues that are reducing the natural productivity of fisheries and impacting livelihoods.

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