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Towards a framework for the co-production of social evidence for fisheries governance in the UK

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ICES Annual Science Conference
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Context – the need for social evidence

• The problem
  – Absence of social objectives in fisheries policy
  – Lack of data on social aspects of fisheries

• Current situation
  – Policy makers ill-informed
  – Low level of information on fishing communities
  – No understanding of fisher behaviour, attitudes
  – Difficult to know how to incentivise sustainable behaviour or to predict social impacts of new policies
The research brief

• **Undertake a feasibility study for a new social survey of fishers**
  – Funded by Defra (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs in UK)
  – Provide evidence to inform new policies following EU exit
  – Take into account the huge diversity in fleet & fishing communities around UK

• **Survey data must have benefits for both policy and fisheries stakeholders**
Approach

- Rapid literature review
- Interviews with key informants (n=11)
- Stakeholder workshops (24 participants)
- Policy focus groups (12 participants)
Challenges…

- Achieving representativeness
- Lack of trust
- What is social data?
Social data needs

- Employment structure & generational renewal
- Income & finance
- Health & wellbeing
- Socio-cultural impacts
- Impact of external drivers on businesses
- Participation in science & governance
- Fisheries management
...Solution

Collaboration between policy makers, researchers and fishing stakeholders to **co-produce** survey

- Working with fishing stakeholders
- Sample frame incl. boost for HTR
- Identify areas of consensus in data needs
- Multi-scalar data
- Core survey + bolts ons

**Achieving representativeness**
- Establish institutional structure & rules of engagement
- Endorsement by industry partners improves engagement levels

**Lack of trust**
- Identifying areas of consensus in data needs
- Multi-scalar data
- Core survey + bolts ons

**What is social data?**
Stages in co-production

Level 1: Laying the foundation - gaining agreement on programme design

Level 2: Collecting and analysing the evidence

Level 3: Using the evidence

Level 4: Evaluating the co-production structure

Feedback mechanisms
Principles for a co-produced survey

- Developing a **shared understanding** of ‘co-production’
- Recognising the need for **equality** across partners & shared decision-making
- Defining the ‘**rules of engagement**’ from the outset (e.g. MoU)
- Clear & well-defined **institutional arrangements** (incl. co-funding)
- Having a **shared definition** of ‘social issues’ & data gaps
- Having a **shared vision of the objectives**, scope (e.g. fishers only?) & regularity of the survey
- **Monitor & evaluate** effectiveness of co-production process & quality of data
Anticipated benefits

Policy makers:
- understanding fishers’ perceptions, attitudes and values
- understanding causal mechanisms underlying behaviour
- assessing the context within which fishers operate (e.g. gendered roles, networks of influence);
- providing mechanisms for policy assessment through development of social indicators.

Fishery stakeholders:
- evidence to demonstrate the economic, social & administrative needs
- a tool to negotiate
- giving the fishing industry a stronger voice (and more responsibility) in policy and management
- improving relationships across the sector
Thank you

The full report can be downloaded here: http://www.ccri.ac.uk/fishersices/

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Who should be involved in co-production?