

Title: Advantages and Issues in Using A Fishery Management Plan Approach in Developing Countries: Lessons From Mauritania and Senegal

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Abstract: Worldwide, the scientific community and international organisations have gradually agreed on the need for an ecosystem-based approach to fishery management. However, the practical implementation of such an approach faces huge problems, especially in developing countries where current fishery management systems are generally weak.

One way to improve a fishery management system is to define a set of clearly-defined fishery management units with fishery management plans developed for each unit. The absence of such units leaves fishers free to roam from stock to stock and reduces fisheries management to an ultimately fruitless exercise to reduce fishing effort (which in fact generally means fishing mortality derived from general production models).

In western Africa, Mauritania and Senegal are engaged in the process of moving towards an FMP approach, and this paper attempts to use their experience to draw lessons for other developing countries.

The use of an FMP does not ipso facto ensure success; its precise components will, of course, be critical. Nonetheless the mere adoption of the approach has the advantages that it forces stakeholders to define the nature of the problem to be resolved (in defining the units) and it clarifies the roles of different institutions within the overall management system.

A key issue is that the FMP approach highlights the need for change in areas such as the institutional framework (including the organisation of the line Ministry), the exploitation system, the research support system, and the monitoring (including statistics), control and surveillance systems. As always, such large change will face vested interest. In many developing countries, it will also require the support of development funds.