CREATING ECONOMIC ACTION SPACES FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERS TO PRACTICE THEIR LIVELIHOODS - A CASE STUDY OF THE NEW SMALL-SCALE POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

The new small scale fisheries policy has created an action space for marginalised small scale fishers practice their livelihoods and create economic opportunities for their families and communities. The political action space created to formulate a new small scale policy will now be translated to economic action space. This paper will describe the process of how political action space translates into economic action space at local community level. The key questions that will be answer are: What governance processes and structures are involved in creating economic opportunities for marginalised small scale fishers? What are the constraints for the small scale fishers? What are their conflicts with other right holders in the community? How are fishers organised and how do they understand the governance processes involved implementing the new small-scale fisheries policy. The methodology of this paper is based on desktop review of recent work in small-scale fisheries in South Africa, active involvement in the small-scale policy formulation and community consultation process, and a short survey conducted in fishing community on governance of small-scale fisheries policy conducted in December 2011. Findings suggest that marginalised fishers are not organised and represented by community organisations and many existing right holders are reorganising to capture the economic opportunities. Lack of infrastructure and markets are some of the constraints marginalised fishers are experiencing which leaves the space wide open for outsiders to benefit.