



FISHERIES GOVERNANCE TOOL

A diagnostic tool for stakeholders seeking a comprehensive understanding of the performance of their country's fisheries management system.

Understanding Needs. Nations around the world recognize the environmental, economic and social benefits they can gain when they move toward sustainably-managed fisheries. As a result, many countries are considering changes to the policies and laws that govern their fisheries and shape the way they are managed. To make informed decisions about what changes are needed—and possible—it is first critical to have a comprehensive and reliable understanding of how a country's fisheries management system is performing. However, gaining this level of insight has proven to be a challenge.

Comprehensive Analysis. The new Fisheries Governance Tool (FGT) changes this dynamic. It is designed upon the premise that the most comprehensive and revealing measure of performance can be found at the intersection of three components: 1) the laws and policies governing fisheries, 2) the capacity to implement those policies, and 3) the function and performance of the fisheries themselves.

Use at Any Scale. Users enter data into the tool, where its diagnostic framework analyzes how a fisheries management system is performing, evaluating governance at national, regional, local, and fishery levels. Repeated use of the FGT provides an evaluation of progress, from policy through implementation and outcomes. This allows for an objective and repeatable evidence-based evaluation, with scientific rigor throughout.

Stakeholder Driven. The FGT puts power in the hands of managing agencies, environmental organizations, funders/investors, and other key stakeholders. With the tool, multiple users can track progress against clear measures over time and identify gaps and other challenges that impede continued improvement. Importantly, the FGT allows stakeholders to identify the objectives set in their country's own policy and management plans and track progress in relation to those, rather than against an external standard that may not be relevant or that their country may never be able to meet.

Road Map for Progress. Countries can make immense strides toward achieving environmental, economic and social sustainability when all those working to advance progress have access to the right tools. Whether you are tracking performance, investigating obstacles that may be undermining progress, contemplating policy changes, applying for a certification, or targeting new investments—using the FGT can create consistency in assessing progress over time—and set out a clear road map for progress.

What Makes the Fisheries Governance Tool (FGT) Unique?

The diagnostic framework at the core of the FGT is unique in its comprehensiveness. It is established by three high-level pieces—Policy, Capacity (to implement the policy), and Performance (of the fisheries). This provides a layered approach to evaluating the fishery management system, which can be applied to both state and non-state governance. The FGT builds upon many of the credible and widely accepted assessment tools that are currently available, such as those used for certification to inform markets and indices that measure fishery performance outcomes.



POLICY

The national fisheries policy and related documents explain the purpose of fisheries management, the overarching goals that fisheries management is seeking to achieve, and the principles under which achievement of these goals will be governed. This is essential in the diagnostic framework, because measuring success in all other activities rests on the foundation of durable fisheries management policy. Outcomes must be relative to the objectives sought by the nation, or other responsible body.



CAPACITY

While the fisheries policy states the purpose, goals, and principles that fishery management wants to achieve, it is critical that the management entity has the capacity—the resources, tools, expertise, and authority—to carry out the fisheries management mission. Policy must be backed by budget, personnel, research, monitoring, and enforcement capabilities to move beyond aspiration and achieve real and lasting change.



PERFORMANCE

Measuring performance shows whether the fisheries management system, using available capacity, is functioning to deliver on the expectations of the policy. The approach is to evaluate whether national policy translates to outcomes at the fisheries level.



Having capacity to enforce laws and policies is one of many measures assessed by the FGT. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Erik Swanson)

Want to know more? For more information, email Graeme Parkes, Executive Vice President at MRAG Americas: graeme.parkes@mragamericas.com.

More than 200 measures are evaluated to provide a picture of performance across the Indicators and Performance Areas. Each measure is assigned a score: Basic, Adequate, Good, or Better. Measures of Basic and Adequate are essential for establishing sound and durable fisheries management, while Good and Better measures will promote more sustainable management.

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