

Do World Bank projects live up to their participatory ambition? An example from Senegal

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Abstract

African countries received about US\$2.1 billion aid for the fishing sector. Nevertheless, most African fish stocks are fully or over-exploited, and governance is weak. Senegal takes 8% of the total. Most of this aims at fisheries policy and management (44%), fisheries services (26%) and development (19%), while research accounts for only 10%. US\$28 million is donated by the International Development Association (IDA, World Bank) as part of the West African Regional Fisheries Program (WARFP). Therein 84% of the funding was for policy and management, less than 12% for research disbursed only after project start. We wanted to analyse to which degree the project's objectives have been achieved. Here we propose a fine-scale review of the World Bank project performance. To this effect, we divide the project into the main elements targeting the small-scale sector, namely the fishery policy (Code de pêche) promulgated in 1998 with its new institutional arrangements in the form of Local Artisanal Fisheries Committees (CLPAs), TURFS, vessel registration and fishing permits. We examine three main dimensions which are defined by element indicators to locate project successes and the margin for improvement. This is done by seeking relevant information through semi-structured interviews from local communities in six major fishing communities of Senegal where the project was reported to be successful. We find that even well promoted and conceived components did not meet with expected results, mostly because of weak adaptation to local conditions and insufficient participation. Our results point to good potential for improvement, especially through stronger participatory approaches, particularly during the project's preconception, promotion and successive preparatory phases and building in sufficient time for the cultural changes the project is predicated upon. Research should be carried out during preparation and accompany implementation to achieve better value for money.

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