Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries recommended by the 2001 Conference on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem in Reykjavik, was adopted by the FAO Committee on Fisheries in early 2003. The challenge is about implementation.

Outline

1. EAF definition
2. The “extension” concept
3. Implementation frameworks
4. FAO implementation
5. Implementation by RFMOs
6. Lessons learned
7. Conclusions

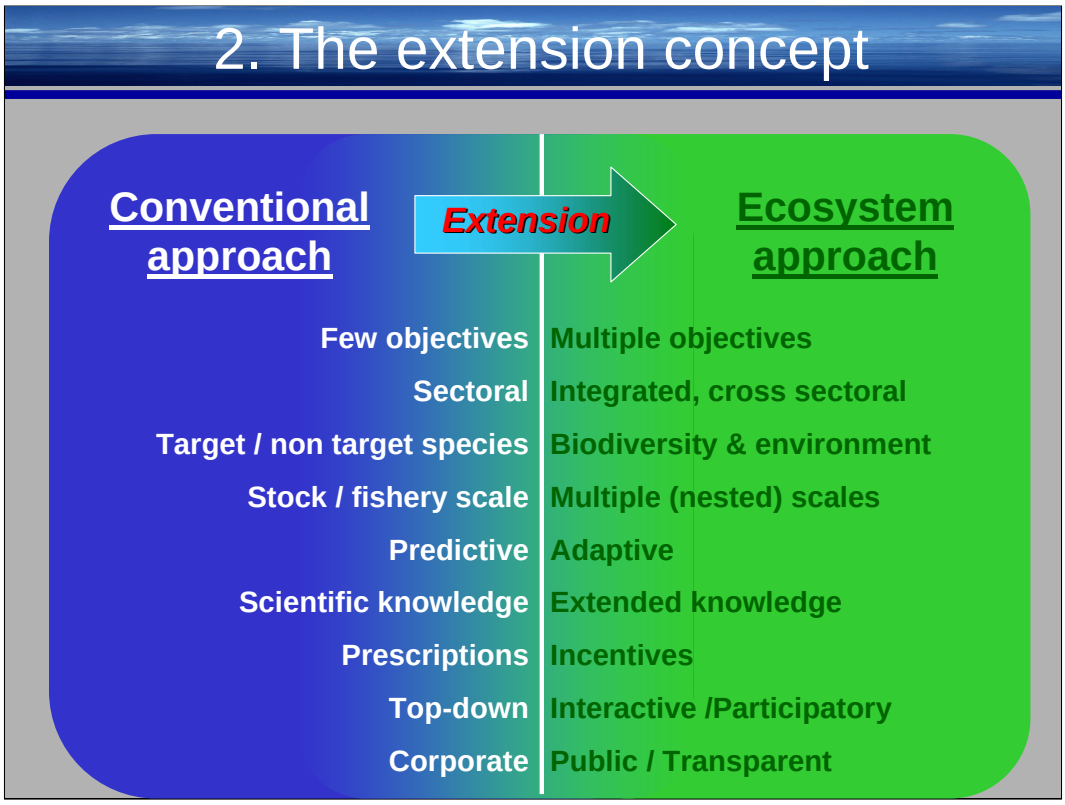
In this presentation, I will rapidly deal with the definition and conceptual basis for EAF, elaborating slightly on the implementation framework, report on FAO work before reviewing the lessons learned and concluding on future developments.

1.EAF definition

The ecosystem approach to fisheries strives to balance diverse societal objectives, by taking into account the knowledge and uncertainties about biotic, abiotic and human components of ecosystems and their interactions and applying an integrated approach to fisheries within ecologically meaningful boundaries

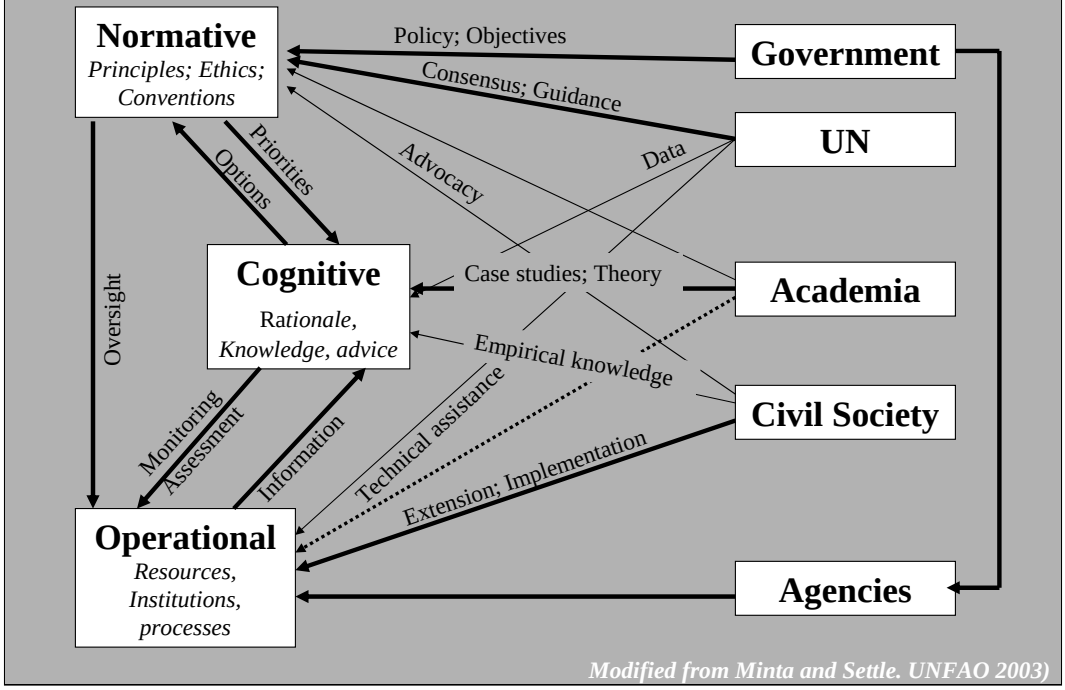
source: FAO Guidelines 2003

The FAO definition is self explanatory. (read it)



EAF is defined as an extension of the conventional fisheries management. This fundamental specification implies that EAF will only be successfull within a complete and effective implementation of the conventional approach. The “extension”, however, charts a route into informational, technological and institutional territories yet to be mapped. Let us have a look at the operational framework.

3. Implementation frameworks



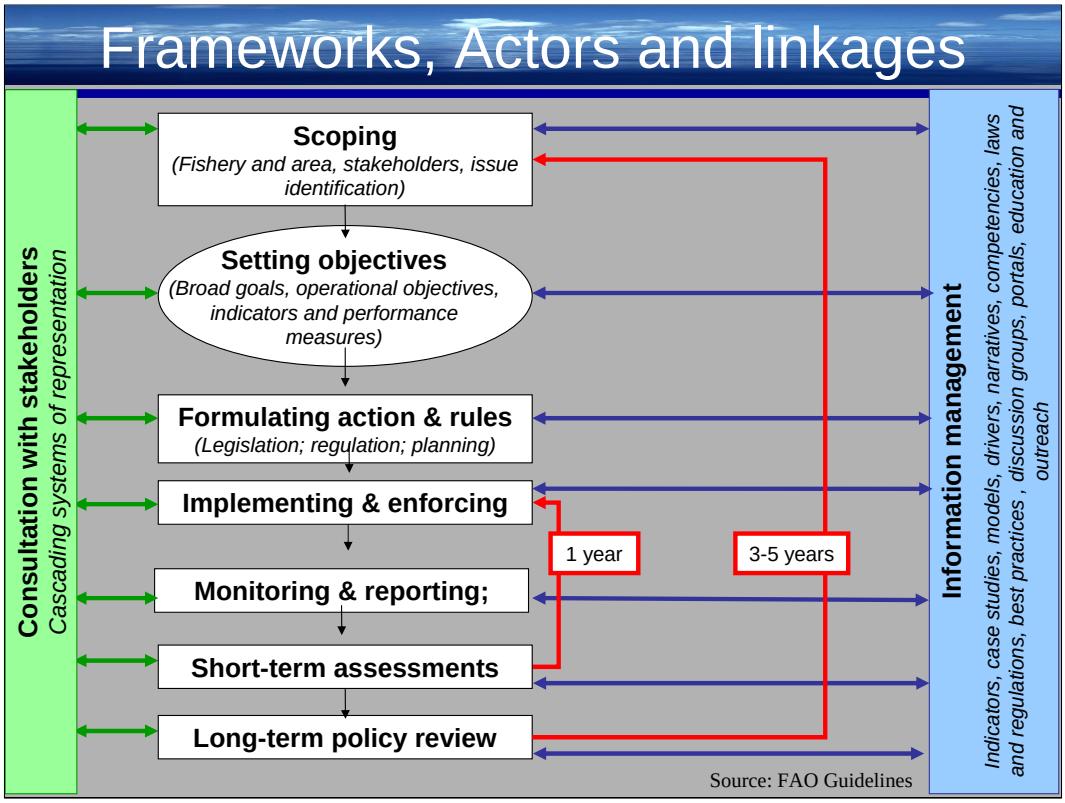
In reality, three different frameworks are at work:

•The operational framework dealing specifically with the resources, institutions and processes mobilized for the implementation in the field.

•The normative framework consisting of the agreed high level axioms, guiding principles and conceptual objectives and

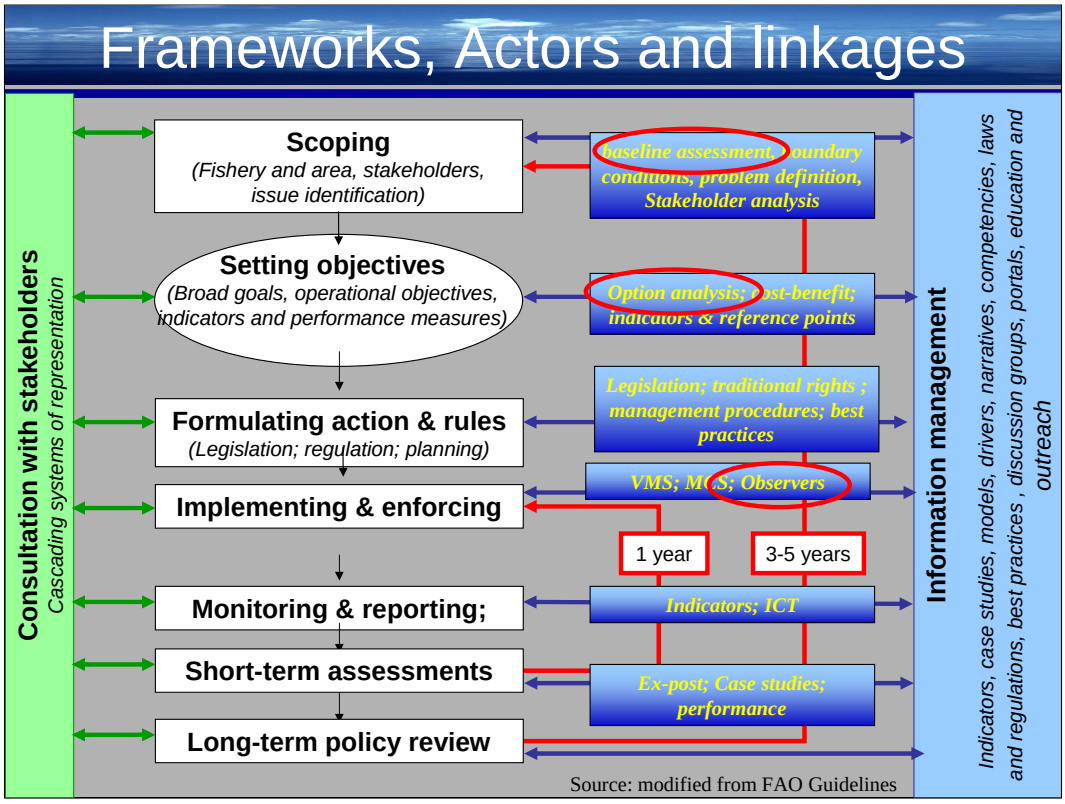
•The cognitive framework through which information is acquired and analyzed and turned into usable knowledge.

Stakeholders contribute in various ways to the various frameworks. The need for guidance of all these actors is very significant.



The FAO Guidelines illustrate how the management scheme is **scoped**, specific **objectives are set** and **rules are formulated** giving the parameters for the action. The plan is then implemented, rules are enforced, indicators are monitored and reported. **Information management** (on the right) and **participation** (on the left) are important components of the process. Tactical performance is assessed regularly and frequently (e.g. on an annual basis). Strategic performance need to be assessed from time to time (e.g. every 5-10 years, together with the national planning calendar). This process can be implemented at global, regional, national or ecosystem levels, even though the actors may be different or have different roles.

This guidance is still not “operational” enough to allow a Fisheries Department staff to implement the approach as each of the boxes in the loop calls for additional guidance regarding actors, means and resources, methodology, processes, criteria, etc.



The type of information needed at each stage of the loop can be detailed **(let the boxes appear**). Even then, there is still a need to drill down, to further detail, for instance on the way to undertake a baseline assessment, to do an option analysis or to set-up a system of observers. The advice required may be already available (e.g. in the numerous guidelines and manuals of FAO) or not.

The lower one drills down in that implementation chain, the more difficult it is to provide a one-fit-all guidance and the process of **operationalization** at site level will therefore always involve a great deal of **customization.**

EAF is usually not implemented in a vacuum. It develops within a conventional fishery management framework that has some capacity and may, in many cases follow efforts to implement related frameworks in support of sustainable development such as Integrated Coastal Area management, Large Marine Ecosystems Management, the livelihoods approach, or ecolabelling. This may facilitate joint or nested implementation provided there is no confusion of mandates and jurisdictions, conflicting objectives, or fights over resources and power, among the agencies concerned. The existence of an explicit, nation-wide, or EEZ-wide Sustainable ecological development strategy would be a key factor of success.

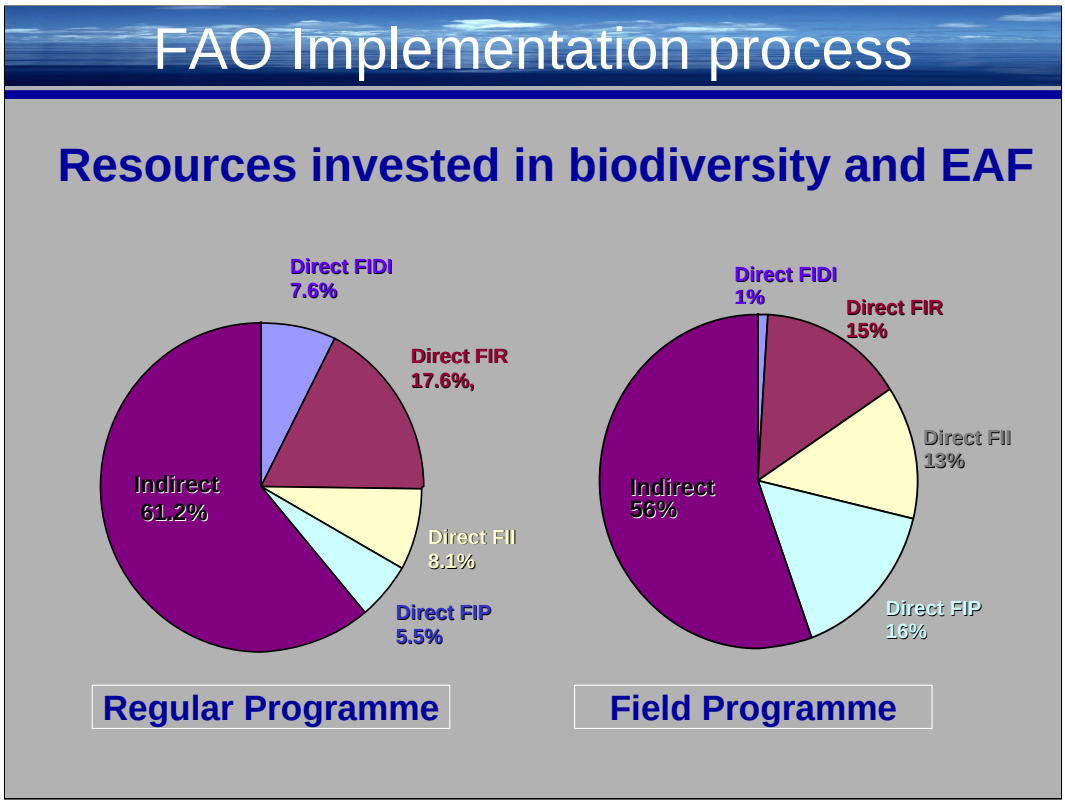
4. FAO Implementation process

1. International collaboration
2. Advocacy in RFBs
3. Guiding documentation
4. Plans and Strategies
5. Special studies
6. Assessment methods
7. Information systems and networks
8. Expert meetings and international conferences
9. Strong field programme

I do not have any time to explain the FAO efforts towards implementation of EAF. I will only mention that it involves ...

The paper that I have made available gives all the details.

FAO Implementation process



40% of the Fisheries budget of FAO is dedicated directly to implementing the EAF and 60% of it is contributing indirectly to it, both in the Regular Programme of FAO and its Field Programme.

5. Implementation by RFMOs

1. Debates on the EAF issue and implications
2. Identification of key ecosystem issues
3. Collection of additional information
4. Collaboration with Regional Env. Commissions
5. Non-binding measures
6. Binding measures

The types of action that have been undertaken or initiated by RFMOs include: (1) Debates on the EAF issue and implications; (2) Identification of key ecosystem issues; (3) Collection of additional information; (4) holding of special working and advisory groups; (5) Agreement on non-binding measures to improve selectivity; develop ecosystemic assessment, monitoring and modelling; protect endangered species and habitats; reduce bycatch and discards; use the precautionary approach; develop educational programmes; establish catch documentation; consider pollution from ships and marine debris; fight against illegal fishing. (6) Discussed collaboration with Regional Seas Commissions

Few binding measures have been adopted such as: formal adoption of EAF (6 bodies); bycatch reduction measures (6 bodies); Habitat protection and MPAs (2 bodies only), precautionary management and endangered species (1 body only);

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EAF has only been on the agenda formally for 3 years. What have we learned in the meantime?

Political viability factors

1. Effective ranking of objectives (scorecard)
2. Commitment and support of political leaders
3. Supported by citizens
4. Nesting EAF in nation-wide policies
5. Production of positive outcomes (success stories)
6. Emphasis on long- and short-term- outcomes and benefits

The viability of an EAF framework depends on political, economic and social factors. Political factors include: ...

Economic viability factors

1. Useful Incentives: subsidies and taxes
2. Identification of benefits and costs
3. Enabling environment for sustainable investments
4. Financing mechanisms for sustainable revenues (fees, taxes)

Economic factors include: ...

Social viability factors

1. Availability of alternative livelihoods to fishing
2. Conflict resolution in place (allocation, transboundary issues)
3. Awareness-raising, communication and education programs
4. Participation to decision-making and enforcement
5. Accounting for cultural factors
6. Equitable distribution of resources, costs and benefits

Social factors include:

Administrative capacity

1. Early identification of obstacles
2. Overcoming bureaucratic inertia
3. Improved coordination
4. Clear legal framework, jurisdictions and responsibilities
5. Agreed strategy and action plans
6. Participative and transparent planning process
7. Deterrent penalties and credible enforcement
8. Adaptive Management
9. Minimum environmental norms
10. Defendable use rights

The existence of a sufficient administrative capacity (in the public and private sector) is a sine-qua-non condition for success. Some of the key requirements are:

- an early identification of likely obstacles and means to overcome them;
- Improved coordination between planning and management, across administrative and political boundaries, with financial institutions, development banks, etc. between countries sharing ecosystems, overcoming bureaucratic inertia;
- Clear legal framework and jurisdictions defining responsibilities and ensuring accountability among ministries and agencies
- Agreed strategy and action plans, generated through a participative and transparent planning process
- Deterrent penalties and credible enforcement. This may require specific training on EAF
- Adaptive Management plan in place with objectives and indicators
- Adoption of minimum environmental norms
- Implementation of defendable use rights in place, integrating traditional rights
- Capacity-building: developing skills and tools including the capacity to adapt to change.

Research capacity

1. Meaningful “bounding” of the ecosystem;
2. Data collection
3. Uncertainty and implications
4. Participatory Integrated Assessment
5. Participatory risk assessment
6. Performance assessment
7. Indicators
8. Improved modeling of complex systems

There is a need to upgrade research capacity to undertake the monitoring and assessments needed. This requires the definition of meaningful boundaries of the ecosystems, improvement of data collection (e.g. on catch statistics and ecosystem functioning); recognition of uncertainty and its implications in terms of risk; adopting a participatory integrated assessment framework to undertaking regular risk assessments and performance assessments; establishing systems of indicators and reference values; and improving ecosystem modeling based on complex systems theory.

7. Conclusions

1. The process has just started: we are learning
2. The implementation can only be progressive, adaptive, multi-facetted and trans-institutional
3. Some “emblematic” actions can readily be taken
4. The solution of old problems: open access; perverse subsidies, illegal fishing, ineffective high seas governance, under-funded research and weak administration, is the sine qua non condition for a successful EAF.

We are still in the very early steps of implementation. A lot of guidance is available already and more will come as experience builds up. Customization needs to take place on a case-by-case. The implementation is absorbing most of the FAO-Fisheries budgetary resources; Regional implementation is very uneven and essentially embryonic. National implementation is very active in very few countries, and embryonic in most of the others. Nonetheless, the experience available yielded a long check list of what needs to be done and taken into consideration.

The EAF “shock wave” will take some time to modify the bio-ecological, technological, economic, socio-cultural, institutional and legal components of the fishery system. It is probably unreasonable to expect an instant full-fledged implementation anywhere and a gradual implementation is more likely. However, a gradual implementation of a complex, systemic, approach is not without dangers. Developing a national framework is a priority which, unfortunately is beyond the capacity of a Minister of Fisheries. The Development of regional frameworks may not be straightforward beyond national jurisdiction, for example, to promote participatory research and decision-making.

Above all, however, the old problems of overcapacity, subsidies, illegal fishing, managing the high seas and under-funded research need to be resolved.

The paper I have distributed gives more details and I will be glad to respond to any question you may have.

Thanks for your attention


Thank you for your attention