The Netherlands – Discards

Research cooperation, discards and self-sampling.

WHO

Thirteen researchers have been directly involved in the Dutch case study, as well as one student. The fishermen who have been most involved are René Sperling (OD6) and Johan and Albert Baaij (TH10), while Inger Wilms contributed in her capacity as a Policy Officer for the industry organisation CVO.

Research cooperation has been ongoing in the Netherlands for over 10 years. In 2012, 142 fishing vessels were involved, or had been involved, in research projects. In this GAP2 case study we have studied ongoing research projects in which self-sampling was used as a method. These were the cod monitoring project (40 vessels), the pulse-trawl monitoring project (25 vessels), and the discards sampling for the Data Collection Framework (DCF) of the EU (23 vessels).

PURPOSE

In this case study we have explored the ongoing practice of research cooperation in the Netherlands, between the research institute IMARES and the demersal flatfish sector. The research focused on the issue of fish discards, and specifically on projects in which fishers are using self-sampling as a data collection method. The purpose was to reflect upon the ongoing cooperation and to learn lessons which could be applied to future research, by both looking back and monitoring ongoing efforts.

IMPACT

GAP2’s impacts have been indirect and varied. The project has led to better working practices (including the production of a self-sampling guide, and the termination of less effective projects) and a better understanding of the use of self-sampling as a method. It has also led to a better appreciation of cooperation structures and to understanding that communication is crucial to the success (or failure) of research cooperation. Similarly, continued monitoring of progress in both projects and surrounding policy-developments, while not taking cooperation for granted, is key to achieving results.

METHOD

Self-sampling was the method central to the projects that were studied. What is self-sampling? How does it work? What does it deliver, at what expense? How should uncertainty and trust issues be dealt with? These were some of the core questions relating to this method. In the case study as a whole, we used mainly interviews, observation and discourse analysis to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

The case study has resulted in improved communication and working practices in ongoing research cooperation projects in the Netherlands. The GAP2 exchange programme has been valuable for the fishers and researchers involved; building trust and facilitating networking in the countries visited. The stories about the exchange visits also served to demonstrate the value of research cooperation, in which both fishers and scientists each have their own expertise that can gain in strength and effectiveness when combined.

LEGACY

Research cooperation is about effectively and respectfully bringing knowledge together from different sources. The aim is to improve the knowledge base which underpins both fisheries policy development as well as decisions directly impacting both fishermen and marine ecosystems. One of the lessons learned in the GAP2 project is that the process of cooperation is equally important as the ‘content’ of cooperation. Social scientists have been trained in working with people to gather information, and as such can make a valuable contribution to fisheries science, together with natural scientists and fishers. The key to research cooperation is the involvement of different experts: fishermen, natural scientists and social scientists.

RESOURCES

• Case study web page – www.gap2.eu/case-studies/case-study-12
• Blog collection describing the exchange between CFRN and Dutch case study participants - http://gap2.eu/the-gap2-exchange/the-gap2-exchange-blogs/cfrn-gap2
• Coöperatieve Visserij Organisatie website - www.cvo-visserij.nl

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Trawlers in the harbour of Stellendam

The crew of the OD6 with observer Kees Groeneveld

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Observer Kees Groeneveld evaluating a discards trip with fisher Cees Sperling (OD6)