

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Fisheries for Fishers Summary Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Gladding Memorial Award Committee



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Citation

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Cover photo: Gladding Memorial Award winners gathered at the 2009 Fishers Summit

1 Introduction

The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) has actively supported science, collaboration, and fisheries management in the Gulf and Caribbean, since 1951. Distinct from many other entities, GCFI has recognized and embraced the importance of involving fishers directly in the science and management of fisheries resources. To this end, GCFI has developed the **Fisheries for Fishers (F4F)** initiative encompassing several activities described here. The purpose of this document is to offer strategic guidance and support to the initiative for the period 2013 – 2018.

GCFI developed the [*Gladding Memorial Award*](#) (GMA) in 2004 to annually recognize a fisher (or fishers) who demonstrates through word and action, their commitment to sustainable use and conservation of marine resources in the Gulf and Caribbean. The award is named in honor of commercial fisherman, Peter Gladding, who demonstrated outstanding conservation leadership and inspired an ethic of sustainable fisheries practices and policies among fishers and managers. As of November 2013, [17 fishers](#) (both men and women) from around the Gulf and Caribbean region have been honored with the Gladding Memorial Award.

GCFI offered the first annual [*Fishers Forum*](#) in 2007, which brought Gladding Award winners together with fishers from around the region to begin to think about and design collective actions. The Forum included a fisher field trip to local fishing communities, allowing participants to exchange concerns. The success of the 2007 and 2008 Forums lead to the [*GCFI Fishers Summit: Fishers Working for Sustainable Fisheries*](#) held in 2009. The Fishers Forum has been held annually at GCFI in all but one year since then. The 2013 Forum, [*Collaborative Science Towards Sustainable Fisheries*](#) was held in Corpus Christi Texas. The Forum was well attended and reinvigorated efforts to implement planned activities. GCFI embraces the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) Initiative to include the GMA, Fishers Forum and field trip, and Fishers Summit.

F4F will continue to recognize and support fishers who engage in best practices in their livelihoods and work towards improving management practices and policies towards long-term fisheries sustainability. In order to reach its goals and have its desired impacts F4F will require expansion. In this context, the GCFI and the GMA Committee that oversees the F4F recognize the following:

- Successful fisheries management must include fishers' views and their active involvement.
- Although postharvest and support sectors cannot be ignored, the harvest sector is priority.
- Hope for sustainable fisheries lies mainly with the small-scale fishers of the region.
- Capacities of small-scale fishers need to be developed to achieve their potential in guiding fisheries policy and management actions.
- GCFI is poised to take a leading role in assisting fishers to develop relevant capacities and to engage in fisheries management and influence policy.
- Sustainable practices can be shared and adapted, contributing to improved livelihoods and long-term benefits to both fishers and fisheries resources.
- GMA winners must be encouraged and enabled to drive implementation of this plan.

Based on these principles the GMA Committee formulated this summary strategic plan for the period 2013-2018. This summary communicates only the main points that fishers have highlighted as being critical from their perspective. Its aim is to share F4F directions and needs with a wide readership ranging from funding agencies to resource users, in order to stimulate action and contributions to the F4F initiative.

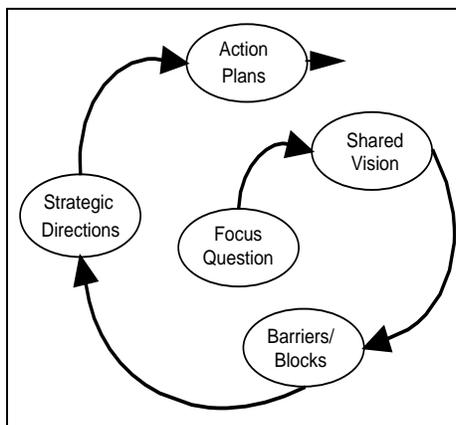
2 Strategic planning methodology

In meetings before and during the 2009 Fishers Summit GMA winners and other leading fishers gathered fishers' input on various topics of relevance to sustainable fisheries resources and livelihoods including:

- Challenges and opportunities for sustainable fisheries
- Ecosystem-based management and fisher visions for sustainability
- Enforcement and compliance to support sustainable management
- Opportunities to diversify fisheries to sustain fishers' livelihoods
- Fishers' involvement in fisheries management and policy

A plenary panel discussion brought to the table the responses and comments of the conference. It was heartening to see the extent to which all participants had similar interests and strongly supported the fishers' vision for the future. A planning session then followed, building on Summit results and attempting to craft follow-up action. The GMA Committee took the lead in starting the 5-year summary strategic plan which was finalized at a special session for fishers held at the 2010 GCFI conference. The plan is being implemented by the GMA Committee with monitoring and evaluation by the GCFI board, aided by review and updating at annual Fishers Forum.

The session at the 2010 GCFI conference was led by the chair of the GMA Committee, himself a GMA winner, based on some prior thought on the main points. These points were presented and discussed by the group present that comprised mainly fishers with some GCFI board members and other interested parties also participating.



The strategic planning process involved posing a focus question to be answered by the participants through development of the plan (see figure at left). A shared vision was discussed and agreed upon before addressing the barriers to achieving it. Acknowledging these barriers gave rise to the basic strategic directions. The final stage of action planning was partially tackled by means of elaboration on the strategic directions, but not in sufficient detail to serve as action plans. The planners, mostly fishers at the 2010 GCFI conference, preferred to leave room for annual review and planning to guide the detailed implementation of the strategic plan. Subsequently a rough 5-year budget was added and has been updated in 2013.

3 Developing the plan

3.1 Focus question

The planning group addressed the following focus question:

How can the F4F Initiative assist fishers, especially GMA winners, to develop adaptive capacity for their benefit and for the benefit of the fisheries of the Wider Caribbean?

3.2 Shared vision

The GCFI members, GMA Committee and GMA winners are at the point of action. Sixty-six annual GCFI meetings have yielded a wealth of data and information. The added development of relevant capacities in administration and project management has put GCFI in a position to contribute towards fishers’ use and support of sustainable best practices and sustainable fisheries management. There are now 17 GMA winners from around the region who are conservation-minded and who also practice and encourage sustainable use of fishery resources in their livelihoods. Their vision is:

Healthy marine ecosystems that have sustainable fisheries which use best fishing practices, managed within an ecosystem approach to fisheries that results in regionally well-organized fishers enjoying a good standard of living

3.3 SWOT analysis with barriers

Despite the optimism expressed in the vision, all is not well with the fisheries resources and their management in the region. This impacts on future fishing livelihoods. Fishers and others present analyzed some of the more prominent strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills in project management • Linkages to fishers, scientists and fisheries management regimes • Store of data and information • Getting different groups to one table (meetings) • Fishers concerned about sustainability of resources and livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of countries • Communication and information dissemination • Non-profit nature, funding dependant • Reliance on volunteers and unfunded labor • Power of other stakeholders intimidates
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified fishers (GMA winners) • Fisher’s organizations (CNFO etc) • Donor relationships (UNEP etc) • Fisheries Management regimes with provisions for fishers’ involvement • Information technology including the world-wide web. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale fisheries (nature of fishery) require support • Fishers lack of skills in advocacy, leadership and representation • Lack of sustained funding streams • Limited mechanisms to support fishers involvement in fisheries management • Communication among different countries, languages and cultures

The weaknesses and threats constitute the strategic plan barriers, but the group thought it wise to also acknowledge the strengths and opportunities that could be built upon or taken advantage of respectively. These are equally important in formulating viable strategic directions for the future.

4 Strategic directions

The group in 2010 only slightly modified the thinking on strategic directions that had been developed at and after the 2009 Fishers Summit. The final output follows.

1. Recognize and award fishers, who are conservation-oriented and utilize sustainable fishing practices, at the GMA awards held at annual GCFI conferences.
2. Develop a cadre of fishers with relevant capacities to participate in advocating sustainable fishing practices, conducting and applying research, and engaging in negotiation on fisheries practice and management.
3. Facilitate and support the exchange of sustainable best practices within fisheries and among fishers, and engage fishers at fisheries management forums.
4. Share data and information on the ecosystems approach to fisheries and sustainable fishing practices, including media to promote GCFI and GMA/Fisheries for Fishers.
5. Attract more decision-makers and managers to GCFI meetings to facilitate direct exchange of information and exposure to perspectives of science and sustainable resource use/livelihoods

5 Arenas for action

In 2010 and 2011 GMA winners, other fishers and members of the GMA Committee offered a series of additional suggestions, a few decisions and action priorities were agreed on and reorganized here for clarity from earlier iterations of this strategic plan:

Gladding Memorial Awards

- Award only one regional GMA winner each year at each GCFI.
- Share more information on criteria and qualifications of GMA winners
- Support the participation of new winner and at least 5 past GMA winners to attend GCFI each year.

Fisher Ambassador Program

- Develop, train, and groom fishers as fisher ambassadors through a series of activities geared towards capacity development (negotiation, advocacy, livelihoods approach, sustainable practice).
- Plan out the Fisher Ambassador Program
- Train 10 fishers in advocacy, negotiation and representation.
- Identify ambassadorial program that would be suitable or adaptable and support training.
- Ambassadors must be totally on-board. They must come together as a body.
- Create an Ambassador funding support program whereby trained ambassadors can applications and criteria for selection.
- Examine existing fishery management regimes and identify areas for fishers' involvement.
- Facilitate and support the engagement of fishers in fisheries management forums.

Fisher Exchanges

- Support fishers' exchanges on sustainable fishing practices and policies.

- Develop the skills required for conducting research and applying lessons learned for the cadre of fishers.
- Conduct fishers' exchanges on sustainable fishing practices and the ecosystems approach to fisheries and assist in the local application of best sustainable fishing practices
- Increase collaboration among GMA winners (local and non-local) and strengthen transboundary communication among fishers in the region

Education and Outreach

- Develop promotional media on GCFI/GMA/Fisheries for Fishers initiatives and package it for mass media, fishery managers, marine scientists, other marine and coastal zone users and fishers.
- Develop an outreach and communications plan
- Collect and disseminate data and information on the ecosystems approach to fisheries, sustainable fishing practices and sustainable marine use for other stakeholders
- Increase the number of fishers making presentations and audience interventions at GCFI
- Increase the number of films/communication on fisher exchanges to share with wider audience
- Improve GCFI web site with more video and visual content relating to fishers
- Increase fishers' voices in scientific presentations; blend knowledge
- Use local fisher folk organisations to assist GMA winners in spreading ideas
- Share more information on criteria and qualifications of GMA winners
- Improve cross-language communication among GMA winners and others

Planning and Organization

- Presently an all-volunteer set of organizers
- GMA Committee to finish drafting the strategic plan and work with GCFI board
- Promote GCFI and GMA well in advance of the next institute meeting
- Ensure local fisher participation is high at GCFI conferences
- Have more managers present during the fisher presentations in the programme.

Funding

- Give priority to fisher ambassadors for small grants and funding of exchanges
- Support education/training of fishers in diversifying sustainable fishing methods
- Assistance required in marketing GCFI, GMA and F4F regionally.
- Seek funding for fishers to participate actively in management and to travel in the region.
- Seek ways to compensate fisher folk for loss of earnings while attending GCFI.

6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The GMA Committee agreed with the planning group to convene a monitoring and evaluation meeting at each GCFI conference and for it to report to the GCFI Board, which has oversight. This was completed in 2013 and led to this, latest summary iteration of the strategic plan.

7 Notes on implementation and budget

Various GCFI initiatives have been fortunate to attract a wide range of partners (inter-governmental, governmental, non-governmental, private sector) that contribute financial resources and in-kind assistance. They are cornerstones for implementation of fisher-related activities, usually tied to the GCFI annual meeting. This is expected to continue, with GCFI board members and other interested parties (all volunteers) managing implementation based on guidance from fishers on the Committee. However, fisher participants continue to recognize that, despite their need to focus on their daily livelihoods, they also need to play more active roles in planning and implementing activities to develop capacity and look after their long-term interests. A large portion of the budget associated with the strategic plan is aimed at supporting their active participation with as few negative consequences to their livelihoods and well-being as possible. A small portion of the budget has been allocated for development and sharing of educational materials. Finally, a minimal amount has been included for organization and operations.

8 Revised funding priorities and budget

During the 2013, Fishers Forum planning meeting, a group of fishermen, including 5 GMA winners, and members of the GMA committee participated in review of the F4F initiative and developed a simplified implementation plan and budget. The plan reflected several real issues identified during the review. The most important issue was the lack of time available for planning and implementation. Another key issue, and one related to the Ambassador Program is that many existing GMA winners are already serving as ambassadors, but need support to continue. Others are ready to participate and would do so if given minimal travel support. Fisher exchanges are the most powerful tool available to address fisheries conservation and we would like to support one exchange each year. If the budget were available, specific requests to the GMA committee can be made for education and outreach priorities, ambassador trips, and exchanges. We have simplified the plan and budget in this light. Without immediate support, it will be nearly impossible to continue to move this valuable initiative forward. We are therefore actively seeking support following this simplified budget.

Budget Item	cost/unit	units	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
GMA winner to GCFI (travel)	2,000	1	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,000
Fishers to GCFI (travel)	2,000	5	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000
Fishers Forum at GCFI	6,000	1	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	30,000
Fisher Field Trip at GCFI	5,000	1	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
Fisher Ambassador (travel)	2,000	5	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000
Communications and Outreach	5,000	1	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
Fisher Exchanges	20,000	1	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
Operations and Management	7,000	1	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	35,000
			65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	325,000