

**CAPACITY BUILDING**

**IN THE**

**FISHERIES RESOURCES MONITORING PROGRAM:**

**A GUIDING DOCUMENT FOR PROJECT INVESTIGATORS**

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This document is intended to provide a foundation for understanding capacity building within the context of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) and aid investigators seeking FRMP funding with developing a capacity building strategy into their investigation plans. The FRMP funds projects that collect and analyze information needed for Federal subsistence fisheries management. Alaska Native and rural organizations represent those who depend on subsistence fisheries resources and have perspectives and knowledge that can be valuable in identifying issues, conducting research, and managing these fisheries. But in many cases, Alaska Native and rural organizations lack the capacity to participate in these processes. The Monitoring Program is committed to building the capacity of Alaska Native and rural organizations to participate in subsistence fisheries management, and projects funded through the FRMP should strive to help meet this commitment.

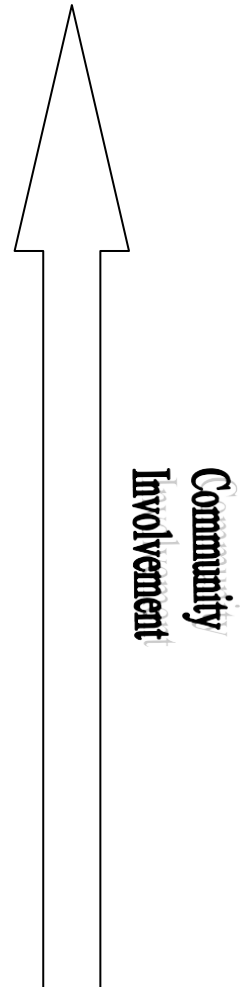
At its most basic level, capacity building is a dynamic process by which individuals, organizations, institutions and societies develop abilities to take on projects and solve problems in a sustainable fashion (see Appendix A: *Select Definitions of Capacity Development*). For the purposes of the FRMP, capacity building is defined as increasing the ability of Alaska Native and rural organizations to participate meaningfully in Federal subsistence fisheries management and research.

For projects funded through the FRMP, investigators must consult with Alaska Native and/or rural organizations in the area(s) in which they plan to conduct research. Investigator(s) must identify the partner(s) and describe the level of involvement the partner will have in the project. The level of involvement an organization may have in a project is largely based on the interests and abilities of the organization. The wide range of possible involvement is outlined in the following chart entitled Capacity Building as Measured by Levels of Community Involvement in FRMP Projects. As illustrated, merely informing a group about a project is level one, having the group conduct the project is level 8. In general, FRMP projects are expected to be at level 4 or above. Investigation plans should include a strategy for integrating capacity building into the project. In developing such a strategy, investigators should consider the following:

- be realistic about what needs to be done, and how it can be accomplished
- work with Alaska Native and rural organizations to define and address research and management problems/issues -- people tend to be more invested in a project if they see it as addressing an important issue
- work with Alaska Native and rural organizations to develop mutually satisfactory and reasonable approaches to collecting information – think outside the box as new approaches may be warranted
- work with Alaska Native and rural organizations in identifying and measuring goals and objectives
- work with Alaska Native and rural organizations to establish realistic timelines and define success
- identify progressively greater Alaska Native and rural organization involvement over 1-5 year horizons, and incorporate these objectives into the investigation plan.

Capacity Building  
as Measured by Levels of Community and Rural Organizations'  
Involvement  
in FRMP Projects

Level	Action	Description
8	<b>Community Control</b>	Projects are locally derived, administered and managed; full responsibility for project management is delegated to or assumed by the community or rural organization.
7	<b>Partnerships</b>	Partnership of equals between State and Federal agencies and local users; joint decision making institutionalized
6	<b>Collaboration</b>	Community/organization is involved in policy and decision making about project objectives
5	<b>Cooperation</b>	Use of local knowledge and local research assistants; some research/assessment activities are contracted to local groups
4	<b>Developing Partnerships</b>	Partnerships in project development may start; common objectives sought
3	<b>Communication</b>	Two-way communication begins; research plans begin to include and reflect local concerns
2	<b>Consultation</b>	Communities/organizations are consulted on projects; feedback from research findings go to community
1	<b>Informing</b>	Communities/organizations are informed about projects; communication is one way



(Adapted from Berkes, et al. 1991. Co-Management: The Evolution of the Theory and Practice of Joint Administration of Living Resources. TASO Research Report, Second Series, No. 1. McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, pg. 36)

### Thoughts Regarding Capacity Building

- If capacity building is to work, then agencies must be better at bending their policies and procedures to the needs and circumstances (Schacter 2000).
- Results should be understood not in terms of projects approved or funds transferred, but rather in terms of the agencies contribution to building recipients capacity to plan,

implement and evaluate their own process. The ultimate desired result is that one day the recipient will no longer need the development agency's support (Schacter 2000).

- Speed should be understood not in terms of the pace at which the agency can process the financing of new projects and programs, but rather in terms of the recipients need for capacity. Projects which move quickly through the agency, but which ultimately have little impact on capacity building, indicate slow moving and inefficient approach (Schacter 2000).
- Where concepts lack precision, and meanings are implicit rather than explicit, there is a risk of creating misunderstanding as well as of raising different expectations among stakeholders.
- Issues of ownership, commitment and leadership are central to this notion of capacity as process (Land 1999).
- Recognition of capacity development as a process carries implications in particular for the roles performed, and approaches used by external organizations in working with local organizations (Land 1999).
- Ownership, commitment, leadership, and local execution are central to the realization of capacity building objectives (Land 1999).
- When capacity building has to do with fundamental change, then political and cultural realities require that one proceeds with caution, sensitivity and respect, seizing opportunities where changes are welcome (Land 1999).
- When dealing in the capacity building realm, there is a need to balance questions of urgency with those of effectiveness. An exploratory phase enables adequate preparations, but it increases the timescale and postpones the realization of tangible results. This can be problematic both for partners and funders looking for results, while it raises program costs significantly without offering at the outset guarantees of results. A solution is to build in short term activities to demonstrate that something is happening while longer term programming takes place. It also suggests that there is perhaps not a shared understanding of the concept of capacity building (Land 1999).

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## ***Appendix A: Select Definitions of Capacity Building***

- Capacity building involves the long term, contributes to sustainable social and economic development, and is demand driven. It strengthens and enhances existing capabilities (Morgan 1993).
- Capacity building is the ability of individuals, groups, institutions and organizations to identify and solve development problems over time (Morgan 1999).
- Capacity building is the combination of people, institutions and practices that permits countries to reach their development goals... Capacity building is...investment in human capital, institutions, and practices (World Bank 1996).
- Capacity building is a process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organizations and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable manner (Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA], 1996).
- Capacity building is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities; to perform functions, solve problems, and achieve objectives; to understand and deal with their development need in a broader context and in a sustainable manner (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1997).
- Capacity building is an ongoing process by which people and systems, operating within dynamic contexts, enhance their abilities to develop and implement strategies in pursuit of their objectives for increased performance in a sustainable way (Lusthaus et al, for IDRC, 1995).
- Capacity can also be viewed from a dynamic perspective – a continuous process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organizations, and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet challenges in a sustainable manner. Here greater emphasis is placed on questions of role and relationships, attitude, and responsibilities at organizational and societal levels (Land 1999).
- Capacity building can be defined as the ability of individuals and organizations or organizational units to perform functions effectively, efficiently, and sustainably. This definition has three important aspects: first, it indicates that capacity is not a passive state but is part of a continuing process; secondly, it ensures that human resources and the way in which they are utilized are central to capacity development; and thirdly, it requires that the overall context within which organizations undertake their functions will also be a key consideration in strategies for capacity development (UNDP Paper).
- Acquiring or strengthening skills, process, and systems to help local people and villages take control of their own lives and manage their resources (Bristol Bay Native Association).

