

CURRENT PROBLEMS IN FISHERIES COOPERATIVES IN  
WANG-NGA BAY: PRIVATE OPTIONS FOR  
STRENGTHENING COOPERATIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING  
COMMUNITY-BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The DOF conducts a number of activities throughout Thailand that support a community-based approach to fisheries management. In Phang-nga Bay, DOF activities support three fisheries cooperatives; the Fishing Gear Group, Mariculture Group and Fish Processing Group.

These ongoing pilot activities were introduced in 1990. Members of each group are full-time fishermen, and membership in each group includes more than 20 families. Community-based management of each group is set up and organized by a selected representative of the members in meeting fishermen's needs, which include for example, fishing gears, seedlings, marketing, public health, education of children, and loans.

## 2. PROBLEMS OF FISHERIES CO-OPERATIVES IN PHANG-NGA BAY

Community-based management of each group is still loose because of the following weaknesses:

- The fishermen are poor and ill-educated and lack market power. Fish prices are in the hands of local and powerful middlemen.
- The fishermen are full-time fishers. Gillnets (targeting fish, shrimp and crab) are the dominant fishing gears, while other traditional gear types (targeting fish trap, handline, hook, etc) are still in use. Fishermen used these gears to catch target-specific fish species during particular seasons of the year. Changes in fishing gear types are also due to season. Fishermen have no free time to devote to taking part in the community-based organization.

- The organizers do not know how to organize accounts. Loans have not been repaid.
- Cold storage and ice producing factories are not available. Fish is landed at a local fishing pier or village with no ice preservation. Transportation is also simple; no truck or car transports fish directly to the market.

The fishermen and housewives do not know how to minimize fish wastage and post harvest losses. There has been no adaptation for better technologies to find ways and means for alternative utilization of fish discards for human consumption or for other use.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Options for strengthening the co-operatives must be addressed by the community-based fisheries management initiatives in Phang-nga Bay. These options should consider the above weaknesses and needs of the Bay communities.