



**Fisheries Co-Management:
Value proposition and
consequences for fishers
and management agencies**

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What is Fisheries Co-Management?

*“An arrangement where responsibilities and obligations for sustainable fisheries management are **negotiated**, **shared** and **delegated** between government, fishers, other interest groups and stakeholders.”*

- Not something government does alone
- Factors related to trust and legitimacy





Co-Management is about ---

- Better consultation
- Administrative efficiency and cost reduction
- Responsive management decisions
- Ecologically sustainable development (ESD)
- Building trust & responsibility
- A social process





Co-Management is not ---

- Determination of property rights
- Resource allocation decisions
- Removing government or other stakeholders from management
- Delegating all responsibility to industry
- Community management
- About achieving consensus among all stakeholders about management



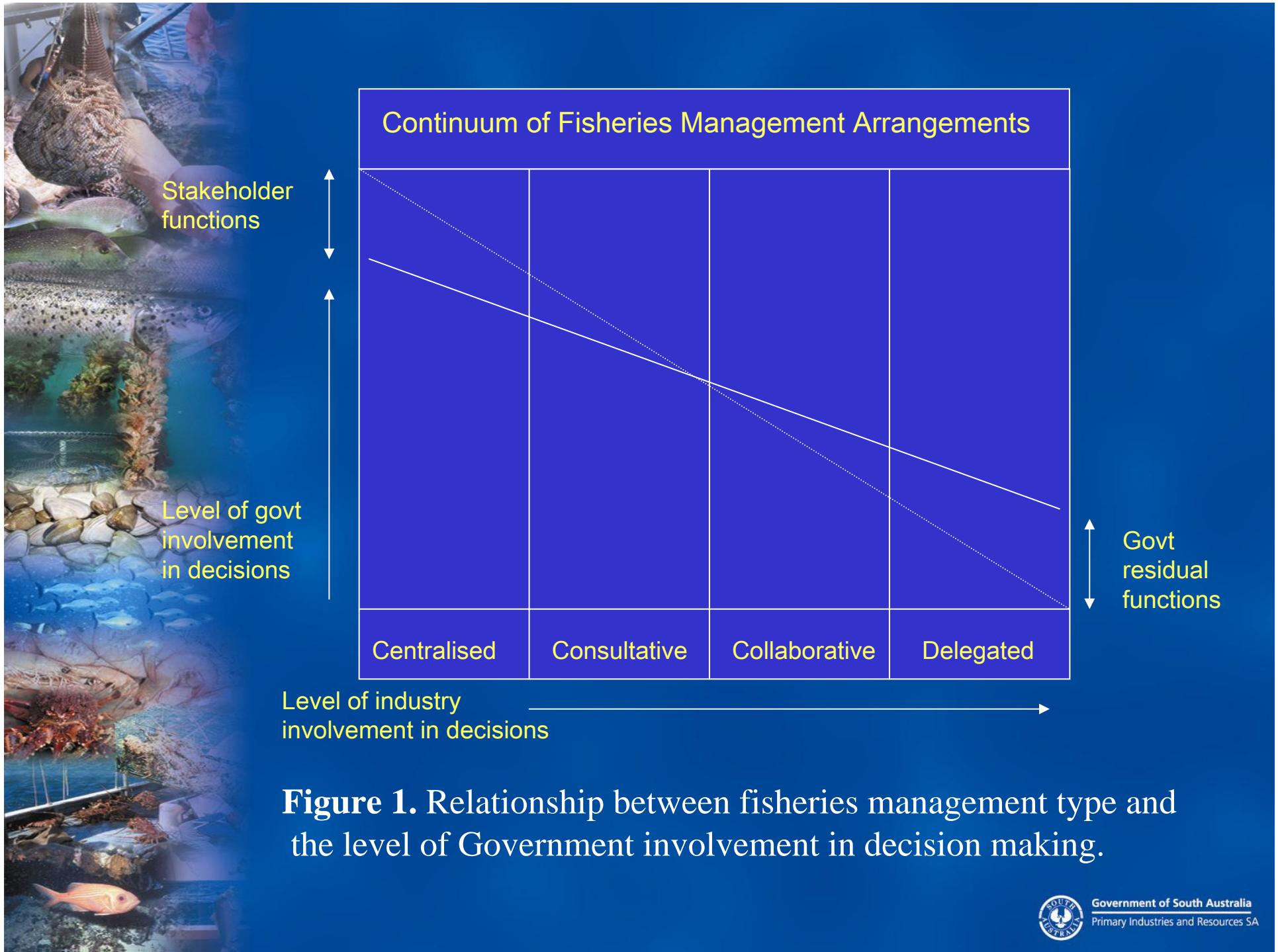


Figure 1. Relationship between fisheries management type and the level of Government involvement in decision making.



Stages of Co-Management

- **Centralised model** – govt makes the decisions with little or no consultation
- **Consultative model** – govt makes the decisions but consults with stakeholders
- **Collaborative model** – govt & stakeholders co-operate in jointly reaching decisions
- **Delegated model** – agreed & negotiated decisions are made by stakeholders within a broad management framework; functions and services are delivered by stakeholders under a formal agreement





Why move to a Co-Management Model?

- Centralised and Consultative Models continue to demonstrate management failings and high cost in many fisheries
- Move to shared responsibility for sustainable harvest levels
- Responsive, adaptive management changes to market signals
- Move from a confrontational to a partnership approach





Common drivers for Co-Management

- Genuine partnership, shared responsibility & improved resource stewardship
- Build trust & productive working relationships
- Reduced necessity for political decision-making
- Transparency of management costs & service delivery





Common drivers for Co-Management

cont:

- Regulatory optimisation
- Inclusive & transparent decision-making
- More flexible & adaptive management responses
- Greater ability to innovate & respond to industry development needs
- Increased opportunity for capacity building & skills development in stakeholder organisations





Other Drivers

Commercial fishers

- Public perception of industry
- Co-operation among participants
- Improved investment climate & certainty
- Better social outcomes – work/life balance

Recreational fishers

- Highlight the economic & social importance of fishing
- Opportunity for finer scale spatial management





Main drivers for Govt

Three categories:

- Build trust & stakeholder responsibility for management decisions
- Potential for cost savings by industry undertaking more functions
- Management decisions more effectively implemented & compliance costs reduced





What functions can be delegated?

- Administration
- Monitoring & assessment
- Research & development
- Management planning
- Communication & extension
- Compliance (limited)





Can industry undertake these functions?

- Of course they can!

Examples in Aust:

- Harvest strategies – Spencer Gulf prawn fishery
- R&D projects
- Fishery data collection & monitoring
- Communication & extension
- Codes of Practice, EMS, Risk mitigation for protected species





Can industry undertake these functions?

Cont:

Examples from overseas:

- Challenger Scallop Enhancement Co. – New Zealand
- Fishserve – New Zealand
- Japan – Coastal fishing co-operatives
- Norway – quota trading & fish marketing
- Canadian scallop fishery – harvest areas





What functions remain with Government?

- Policy development
- Legislation
- Creation of fishing access arrangements
- Allocation of resources
- Sustainability indicators
- Enforcement & prosecution
- International fisheries issues
- Regional planning & development





Operationalising Co-Management

Important to note 3 issues:

- The necessary “pre-conditions” must exist to move to a delegated model
- Any delegation of functions should involve a binding legal instrument, so specific performance is measurable and capable of being audited
- Need to undergo a “due diligence” process, so all parties understand exactly what commitments are being made.





Pre-conditions for Co-Management

Essential pre-conditions:

- Govt/agency having a culture of willingness to debate alternative management models involving greater shared responsibility
- A resource user group/industry where a high proportion of members are motivated & united towards an outcome of greater shared responsibility





Pre-conditions for Co-Management

cont:

- Identified champions who can build industry ownership and lead the negotiations
- A strong industry organisational structure with good governance
- A participatory rather than adversarial relationship with govt
- Ability to communicate effectively with all stakeholders
- Agreed conflict resolution mechanisms





Pre-conditions for Co-Management

cont:

- Financially viable resource user group, or capacity to attract sufficient funds
- Existence of a legislative basis to delegate powers
- Absence of any significant unresolved social/community conflict issues
- Ability to negotiate MOUs, contracts, decision rules, performance indicators & report on performance
- User group possessing the necessary capabilities to deliver, or to access such





Pre-conditions for Co-Management

cont:

Supporting pre-conditions:

- Clearly specified & legally recognisable access or property rights
- A single target species fishery with clear spatial boundaries
- A well documented & researched fishery, including its ecosystem impacts
- Govt has support from other stakeholders





Moving Co-Management forward

- Addressing the drivers
- Changing the culture
- Industry organisational structures
- Building capacity & skills
- Demonstrating commitment
- Leadership - change agents
- **Evolutionary – not revolutionary**





Threats to Co-Management

- Lack of leadership
- No industry champions
- Not understanding it is a long process
- Govt/agency reluctant to hand over some control
- Poor communication & extension
- Unresolved conflict
- Lack of funding & political will





SUMMARY

“Co-Management should be seen as a social process through which the partners gradually & voluntarily establish a close relationship of long-term duration through increased **responsibility**, **commitment** and **trust**”

(Chuenpagdee and Jentoft 2007)

