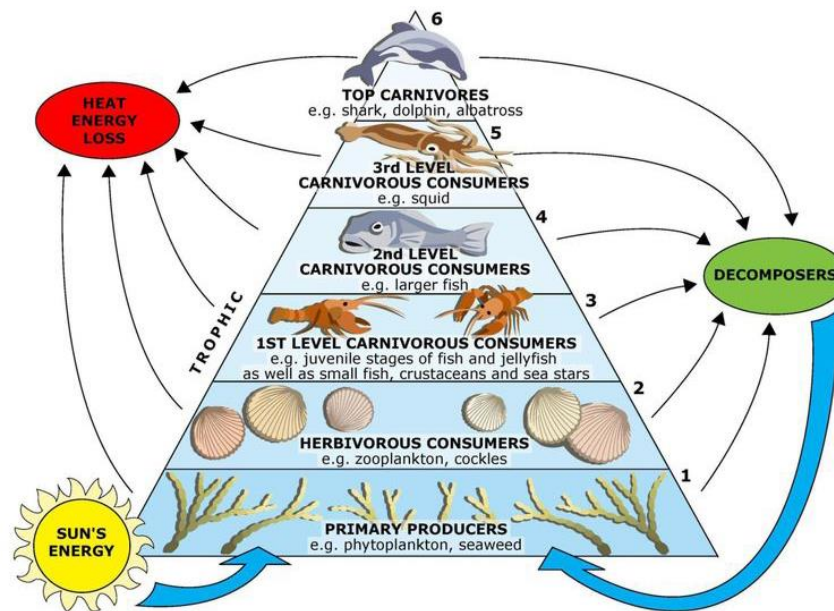


Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM): A Tool for Balancing Ecological Wellbeing and Human Wellbeing through Appropriate Governance



Consistency of EAFM

The ecosystem can be defined as the complex of living organisms, their physical environment, and their interrelationships in a particular area unit. Ecosystems are complex and dynamic that produces goods and services. Fisheries directly impact the ecosystem as it is a part of the ecosystem, and fisheries need to be managed through ecosystem context. A well-governed fisheries sector deals with the abundance in fisheries production, a healthy environment and habitats, increased jobs and profit, an improved economy, improved human health and prosperity and a legacy for the future. EAFM is one of the practical ways to develop fisheries by finding a balance between ecological and human wellbeing through good governance. EAFM is not new to the world. But for Bangladesh and especially for marine fisheries, the application of EAFM is not so popular, but now it is time demand. Building up from the existing management system, but accounts for the broader ecosystem impacts of fisheries and directions on managing more holistically the simplest way for EAFM. The seven key principles of EAFM are good governance, appropriate scale, increased participation, multiple objectives, cooperation and coordination, adaptive management and the precautionary approach. These are mainly responsible for a well-governed fisheries sector, with abundant fisheries production, a healthy

environment and habitats, increased jobs and profit, an improved economy, improved human health and prosperity and a legacy for the future, the ultimate goal of the country.

Fishers face many threats and issues like climate change/pollution that may reduce their potential to contribute to sustainable development. A holistic approach is a must at this challenging moment. The existing fisheries management is mainly based on a single species consideration or considering a single part of the business like catch enhancement/production enhancement/environment management. EAFM mainly focuses on multiple species rather than on single species conservation. There is multi-stakeholder participation and also consider the human wellbeing as well. In the past, fisheries management had only focused on fish and fishing, but not all the issues impacting or impacting the fisheries sector. EAFM practice maximizes the ecosystem benefits, resulting in reduced poverty, ensures livelihood and maximizes the benefit.

Five Steps of EAFM

Conducting the EAFM procedure may include total 5 steps along with 3 different phases (plan, do, and check and improve). Within the "planning phase" (steps 1–3), EAFM plans are carried out. The "doing phase" is the action for implementing the developed plan (step 4). The "checking and improving phase" (step 5) is the bedrock of EAFM. The monitoring and evaluation part of step 5 generally assesses the consequences of the management actions and provides an opportunity to make decisions adapted over time. This evaluation information of the EAFM plan is communicated with stakeholders, and this information is used to revise and update the plan so the cycle begins again correctly.



Figure uploaded by Stuart James Green.

What Could be the Institutional Role in Mainstreaming EAFM in Bangladesh?

- Engaging relevant organizations by creating a platform for them, where policymakers can be engaged
- Capacity building of stakeholders
- Piloting EAFM in a particular area/field site through addressing human wellbeing and ecological wellbeing
- Share lessons learned with the government implementing partner, such as DoF and closely work with different level national authorities

- Provide technical support to government agencies in making the right decision
- Arrange multi-stakeholder workshops or meetings to develop an effective work plan and implementation of EAFM and build strong relationships with different stakeholders
- Alignment of EAFM to existing adaptive co-management
- Extend technical assistance
- Capacity development and continuous follow-up
- Formulation of related policy, strategy, action plan, and assist in the implementation
- Research on ecosystem interactions between species and more funding for the right plan through scientific research.

The EAFM can be an essential tool to fulfil the SDG targets related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine areas. It is the keystone for harnessing the potential of the blue economy by ensuring sustainable, inclusive and equitable management of marine resources by balancing ecological wellbeing and human wellbeing through appropriate governance. Bangladesh should consider EAFM practice in the present era to fight against different environmental or artificial hazards to develop a sustainable marine fisheries sector.