



STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE PROCESSES IN THE GALAPAGOS MARINE RESERVE

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The Galapagos Marine Reserve (GMR) is one of the world's top marine protected areas due to its size, extraordinary range of biological communities, levels of endemism, abundance of charismatic species and connection to the terrestrial park. Massive effort and investment is needed in order to adequately manage a reserve 1000 km off its shores, especially given the social, economic and governance challenges that the Ecuadorian government faces.



The Overbrook Foundation supports FFLA's work in the GMR. In the past 6 months, FFLA's work in the Galapagos has been concentrated in four main areas:

1) Strengthening pre-negotiation processes within sectors

As a general strategy to strengthen the governance system in the GMR, FFLA has decided to strengthen pre-negotiation processes among the sectors (fishermen, tourism, natural guides, Charles Darwin Foundation and Galapagos National Park) which participate in the JMP (Participatory Management Board). Although FFLA has worked with all the sectors, we have especially focused in supporting the fishing sector.

One of the main goals has been to build trust and communication bridges among the fishing and the conservation sectors. After several meetings and constant informal contact with the fishermen, they demonstrated open confidence by asking FFLA to facilitate their yearly Convention. The fishing sector is made of 4 different fishermen unions, each with different priorities. Thus this workshop was very important for the fishing sector as it permitted them to begin consensus-building processes and develop an internal dialogue capacity.

In addition, FFLA hired an internal Facilitator for the fishing sector, which is also helping them in their internal organization processes. FFLA meets periodically with the facilitator and provides technical advice.

2) Support for Economic Alternatives

In order to reduce the pressure over sea-cucumber and lobster fisheries, the fishing sector demands economic alternatives different from these traditional fisheries. FFLA has developed an internal dialogue process within the sector to help them find viable alternatives which can be implemented in the short term.

After some meetings, which FFLA has facilitated, the fishing sector has produced a document prioritising alternatives. Based on these priorities, FFLA decided to strengthen a small scale fish processing plant which was built by Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) for one of the fishing unions. This fish processing plant will enable fishermen to sell unrestricted fish species (i.e. tuna, cod, etc.) in better conditions at the local market.

Finally, FFLA has been working with the fishermen in two additional economic alternative proposals:

- Solid waste clean-up in coastal areas
- Traditional Fishing Experience in which tourists fish with traditional techniques used by local fishermen while learning about their culture.

3) Facilitation of Zoning Negotiation

The approved provisional zoning plan has not yet been demarcated in the field. Although there is no further negotiation needed on delimitation, facilitation to reach consensus on criteria to be applied in the field (at sea) in order to resolve pending issues regarding the exact extension and location of certain sites has been required. Thus, FFLA has been providing this facilitation among JMP sectors.

4) Crisis Response

In critical situations, FFLA constantly provides technical advice and support to different sectors by organizing informal meetings with them to find possible solutions and promoting dialogue among them. The current situation in Galapagos provides an example.

The JMP has been discussing the opening of the 2005 sea-cucumber fishery and the approval of logline fishing (a fishing technique opposed by environmentalists because of the incidental fishing it produces). The *Autoridad Interinstitucional de Manejo* (AIM) had to make a final decision about these two issues. However a week before the AIM's meeting, the newly appointed Minister of Environment, who presides the AIM, made public declarations opposing both the sea-cucumber fishery and the longline fishing. As a consequence, the fishing sector publicly expressed its preoccupation and threatened to hamper transportation in order to obstruct the normal flow of tourists.

FFLA met with the Minister of Environment in order to explain the history of the negotiations. FFLA also met with the fishermen in order to learn about their views and identify possible dialogue bridges. These actions contributed to bring down the tensions and the AIM is currently taking place.