

ICES CM 2016/F

Searching for the name of the game: stakeholders engagement in the implementation of the EBFM in the European Union

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Keywords: participation, stakeholders' engagement, EBFM, European Union.

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Abstract

Stakeholder engagement is not only a tool for the effective implementation of the EBFM, but represents one of its core features. However, participatory approaches are not straightforward in a multifaceted and contested policy area such as the governance of living marine resources. Getting the participation right and getting the right participation is particularly critical in the European Union (EU), where multiple players interact in highly complex multilevel governance frameworks. Yet the EU is trapped within a system that does not seem well suited for the task ahead. If traditional fisheries management has failed to achieve meaningful participation, EBFM could be understood as both a need and an opportunity to reverse this trend. Applying a combination of research methods (survey, interviews and structured stakeholders interactions) we analyze the current participatory processes in the EU fisheries, addressing the specific puzzles created by the EBFM and how participation can be enhanced within the real policy context. Our findings provide useful insights to advance towards a successful implementation of the EBFM in the EU. This research has been carried out within the framework of the MareFrame project www.mareframe-fp7.org