



26-28

May 2016

Brest, France

Course: Social Science Methods for Natural Scientists

Research projects are increasingly interdisciplinary enterprises, with stakeholder processes and engagement with SMEs considered a priority. In this changing professional context, gaining relevant research skills is becoming a necessity.

Marloes Kraan, social scientist at IMARES Wageningen University | Maiken Bjorkan, Nordland Research Institute, Norway

Increasingly, natural scientists work with others, in our case, fishers; collaborating, communicating, and participating together to increase the knowledge base and policy relevance of our work. A consequence of this is a need for more targeted training in social science research methods, such as interviewing, observing, and mapping.

This course will have a “learn by doing” set up. The facilitators provide guidance on the basics of the methods while participants develop their confidence in using them. Background information (such as the epistemology and ontology of the social sciences) and the underpinning social science theory will also be discussed for participants to learn more.

Objective

Through gaining new skills, participants will be better able to work effectively with stakeholders in (cooperative) research projects, as well as having a better appreciation of the strengths of social sciences in fisheries research.

Level

It is assumed that scientists have a natural science background, have or will have experience with working in cooperative research projects, working with stakeholders or are otherwise interested in learning more about social science methods in fisheries science. No knowledge of social science is required.

As the saying goes, 'It is not the fish that need managing but the people that make up the fishery'. It's a crucial point that reflects both the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of marine science and the focus of the ICES training course 'Social scientists methods for natural scientists', taking place 27 - 29 May, 2016 in Brest, France.

Course instructors, Marloes Kraan, social scientist at IMARES Wageningen University, and Maiken Bjorkan (Rana Innovation Company, Norway), first delivered a similar work-shop for the EU-funded GAP2 project, itself a meeting point for cooperative study between those from science and the fishing industry.



"One of the GAP2 deliverables was a methodological toolbox for helping researchers design a collaborative research project," describes Kraan. "However good the idea we did not like the idea of a 'toolbox' where natural scientists could just pick out whatever they wanted to use. As if methods are neutral tools; they require training, and as if the 'information extracted' would automatically be handled properly. So we offered to develop a course where people less familiar with these tools could practice using them, and get feedback and tips. But we also wanted to give the participants an understanding of the social science context in which these methods are used. In social science people are studied; and people can give meaning to their world. So studying them really is about studying their perspective".

Best of both worlds

Both the GAP2 course and the upcoming ICES one reflect growing demands placed on scientists to move towards more integrated approaches. Those involved are thus required to cultivate skills in new areas such as interdisciplinary working and stakeholder involvement. It's a trend that is at the heart of the training workshop, the confluence of two fields of study which is, as Kraan puts it, "the need for social and natural scientists to understand the theories, concepts, and methodologies of each other's work."



"By carrying out an interview, you are entering into the lives of people. And by entering into the lives, you may also be changing the system that you intend to study. The awareness that the role of the researcher is not neutral within the social context that you are operating is an important lesson for natural scientists."

Martin Pastoors

26-28

May 2016

Brest, France



Register now!

<http://www.ices.dk/news-and-events/Training/Pages/Social-Science-Methods-for-Natural-Scientists.aspx>