

Contents

1	Training course information	1
2	Programme.....	2
3	Course products	3
4	Course instructors	3
5	Recommendations	3
6	Review of the online format (if applicable).....	4

i Summary

The four-day course Social Science for Natural Scientists was given in the Netherlands to eighteen participants from eleven countries.

The course has been developed for natural scientists that would like to gain a better understanding of social science methods, and the broader picture of how social science compared to natural science approaches. Prior to the course, participants are asked why they would like to follow the course, which helps tune the course to their needs. This course provides 'hands on' guidance on the basics of social science methods, required to navigate the challenging landscape of increasingly interdisciplinary research projects with a strong emphasis on stakeholder participation and engagement. Methods such as interviewing, participant observation, mapping etc. are explained and practiced in a supportive and interactive course designed to develop confidence and capacities. Background is given about how social scientists understand and study the world and underpinning social science concepts will also be discussed where appropriate. The course is designed to be challenging, flexible, and fun, and includes fieldwork in a fishing port. 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.

1 Training course information

Venue and dates:

The Hague, Netherlands, 11 – 14 March 2025

Instructors:

Marloes Kraan, WUR & DCC, The Hague, The Netherlands

Nathalie Steins, WMR, IJmuiden, The Netherlands

Host (if relevant): Wageningen Social & Economic Research, The Hague, the Netherlands

Number of participants

The course can host maximum twenty-one participants (enabling group work of three people). A total of 18 people, of multiple scientific disciplines, from eleven countries participated. Participants represented a mix of career stages, from early career scientists to post-PhD, and from different organisational backgrounds (institutes, academia, non-governmental organisations).

Objectives

Research projects are increasingly interdisciplinary enterprises often with a strong emphasis on stakeholder participation and engagement. As a result, natural scientists are being called upon to engage with a broader set of scientific and societal stakeholders and operate in new and challenging environments. In this changing professional context, gaining appropriate research skills is becoming a necessity.

What this means in practice is finding new ways to collaborate, communicate, and engage with stakeholders (in our case fishers), managers and policy makers to broaden the knowledge base and increase the policy relevance of our work. As a result, there is a need for targeted training in social science research methods for natural scientists.

By way of professional introduction to the topic, this course provides 'hands on' guidance on the basics required to navigate this challenging landscape. Employing a participant-led 'learning by doing' approach the facilitators guide the participants step by step through the basics of social science methods such as interviewing, participant observation, mapping etc., in a supportive and interactive process designed to develop confidence and capacities.

Background to the topic such as how social scientists understand and study the world, and the underpinning social science theory are discussed where appropriate. The course is designed to be challenging, flexible, and fun, and includes fieldwork in a fishing port.

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 and application of the social sciences in fisheries research.

- Learning (social science methods) by doing

- Learning that (and why) social science entails more than using these methods
- Experiencing challenges and fun of fieldwork and what it can bring in terms of information
- Experiencing the value of collaborating with social scientists in your research

Level

This is an introductory course in social science methods. It is assumed that participants 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.

2 Programme

The course programme is presented in Appendix 1.

During the four days the participants get presentations with a lot of information (on social science methods, how to analyse data or on fishers' experiential knowledge). Presentation includes interactive challenges. The course mostly includes learning by doing exercises such as analysing videos (of how to do an interview, or as if they observe a fishing expedition in Ghana), practice interviewing each other. Analysis of qualitative data, such as coding, is also practised. The course also exposes participants to different stakeholder work-forms and interactive ways of understanding grouping and getting to know a group, and finally, prepare and participate in fieldwork, of which they present the preliminary insights at the end of the week.

Participants receive an email before the course asking them why they would like to follow the course, which helps tune the course to their needs. Topics that were discussed were: facilitating stakeholder meetings, interviewing, (participant) observation, mapping, fishers' experiential knowledge, data analysis, qualitative vs quantitative data and fieldwork preparation.

Excursion and Fieldwork

On the fourth day of the course, participants must practice what they learned in a real-life situation during fieldwork. For this, we went to Scheveningen, one of the fishing ports in the Netherlands. We met local informant Willem Ment den Heijer at the auction at 6.20. He gave us a tour through the auction showing us where the sorting and grading of the catch takes place, we saw the different fish species from the four demersal fishing vessels that had landed their fish on Thursday evening and Friday morning. Then we went outside and could observe several fishing vessels representing different fisheries (pelagic vessels, beam trawlers, gillnetter), some of which were carrying out their post-fishing activities such as offloading their catch and repairing their gear. We continued our tour walking to the marina where we visited an old herring drift netter, which is now a museum ship. On board we met former crew of this fishery. Willem told a lot of stories about his own experiences, his fisher family and Scheveningen as former fishing community. The volunteers of the museum ship, all who had sailed on this or a similar vessel, also shared their knowledge and experience. Then, after a well-deserved coffee, the course participants set out in groups of four to do their fieldwork, making use of the skills they had learned during the training.

The topic of their study was the (perceptions) on fishing as part of identity / social cultural importance of Scheveningen. Each group had prepared their own research plan for a 2.5-hour rapid appraisal. Following the fieldwork, the groups had time to summarise their findings and presented these to their colleagues in a pitch presentation. Following this, we reflected on how the fieldwork went and what they had learned.

3 Course products

The course is built on the GAP2 motto:

What I hear, I forget

What I see, I remember

What I do, I understand.

Participants get information, watch videos, do interactive exercises (in formats they can after the course use for facilitating groups) and do fieldwork. This mix of ways of learning works well for them and triggers a lot of practical questions.

Materials used are flipcharts, laptop and screen, several hand outs (i.e. on interviewing).

4 Course instructors

Marloes Kraan is senior scientist at Wageningen Economic Research, the Environmental Policy Group at Wageningen University and at the Delta Climate Centre in Vlissingen. She is an anthropologist and has worked in applied marine social science since 2002. She has a lot of experience in qualitative social science. Together with Maiken Bjørkan she developed the course in the GAP2 project, which she has given a couple of times (within ICES and elsewhere) with both Maiken Bjørkan and Nathalie Steins.

Nathalie Steins is a senior scientist at Wageningen Marine Research since 2013, and chair of the ICES Human Dimensions steering Group since 2024. Core part of her work is the research collaboration with the capture and culture fisheries towards sustainable management. She is a rural development sociologist with a lot of experience in qualitative social science in different cultural settings. She and has been involved in fisheries in various roles, including research, policy and non-governmental organisations the past 25 years. She has given this course with Marloes Kraan three times and developed other social science related trainings related to collaborative research.

5 Recommendations

Based on feedback received from participants, we recommend:

- keeping the new format of four full days (which we changed following the course evaluation in 2024).
- keeping the participant number to maximum 21 (and preferably 18) with two instructors.

- considering more one-on-one feedback from instructors.
- renaming the course (e.g., Introduction to social science methods and approaches) as not all scientists outside the social sciences and humanities identify with the terminology “natural scientist”.

6 Review of the online format (if applicable)

Not applicable, the course was given in person. The nature of the course means it cannot be given in an online or hybrid format.

Annex 1: Agenda

ICES TRAINING SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR NATURAL SCIENTISTS

Programme Tuesday 11- Friday 14 March 2025

Address: Wageningen Social and Economic Research (WSER), Wageningen University & Research, Prinses Beatrixlaan 582 - 528, 2595 BM Den Haag [World Trade Centre, 5th floor] (directions see page 2 and 3)

Contact details instructors (in case of emergencies): Marloes Kraan + 31 6 106 42542
Nathalie Steins +31 6 192 63336

TUESDAY 11 MARCH	WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH	THURSDAY 13 MARCH	FRIDAY 14 MARCH
			<i>Start at 6.30</i>
10.00-11.00 Opening, welcome and introductions 11.00-12.00 What is social science – mapping exercise & introductory presentation	9.00-09.30 ICES and stakeholder engagement (guest speaker: Marta Ballesteros, chair ICES WGENGAGE) 09.30-10.30 Where do you stand?	9.00-10.00 Role of science 10.00-11.00 Challenges in stakeholder facilitation	6.30 Scheveningen harbour excursion: auction, (historical) fishing vessels – tour by Willem Ment den Heijer Address: Roeleveld Vis (across the auction) Visafslagweg 30, 2583 DM Den Haag <i>(directions see page 4)</i> <i>Wear warm clothes and comfortable shoes that can deal with a wet fish auction floor.</i>
12.00-13.15 LUNCH BREAK*	10.30-11.00 BREAK	11.00-11.30 BREAK	8.30 COFFEE
13.15 – 14.00 Interviewing intro 14.00-15.00 Film Maiken Bjørkan: interview with Jahn Petter Johnson	11.00 – 12.00 What about observation? Introduction and exercise	11.30-12.15 Dealing with challenges in stakeholder participation	9.00-11.30 Fieldwork
15.00-15.30	12.00-13.15	12.15-13.30	11.30 – 12.45

TUESDAY 11 MARCH	WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH	THURSDAY 13 MARCH	FRIDAY 14 MARCH
BREAK	LUNCH BREAK*	LUNCH BREAK*	LUNCH* & TRAVEL BACK TO WSECR
15.30-16.00 Discuss film	13.15 – 14:00 'Fishing for truth': fish- ers' experiential knowledge and anec- dotal evidence	13.30-14.45 Mapping	14.00-15.30 Discuss outcomes and process of fieldwork (including tea and coffee)
16.00-17.30 Interviewing practi- cal and evaluation	14.00-15.00 Data analysis		15.30 Evaluation of the course
	15.00-15.30 BREAK	14.45-15.15 BREAK	
	15.30-17.00 Data analysis practical	15.15 – 17.15 Prepare for fieldwork	
19.00 Group dinner in China Town*			16.00 End & optional drinks

*please note that all lunches and dinners are at own expense

Annex 2: Results of course survey

Provide all the results of the post-training course survey.