

“Fishes” and “Stones” in the implementation of Fisheries Co- management in the Upper São Francisco River, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

**Steps towards Fisheries Co-management in The São Francisco
River Valley, Minas Gerais– Brazil**

**Coordinated by UFSCar and IARA
Funded by IDRC**

Partners:

CIDA-Brazil project “Continental Fisheries in Brazil”

World Fisheries Trust, Canada

Federal University of Sao Carlos, Sao Paulo

State Fishermen’s Federation of Minas Gerais





Project Principles

Action Research

Adaptive Approach

Emphasis on Capacity
Building through Learning
by Doing

Main Issues:

Current fishery management is inadequate for the following :

Centralized in the government agencies (Federal Environmental Protection Agency – IBAMA, State Forestry Institute – IEF, State Military Police – PMMG)

Lack of information about:

Fishery stocks

Catch levels, catch-to-effort ratios

Conflicts:

Among fishermen

Between different group of resource users

Between communities and government agencies





Theoretical Perspectives on the issues

Tragedy of the Commons (Hardin, 1968):

Individualistic values based on gain preclude the possibility of collective benefit in the use of common resources.

Common Resources (Ostrom et al, 1994)

- a) it is very expensive to develop norms and regulations that exclude potential beneficiaries (exclusion problem) and
- b) units of the resource obtained by a user are no longer available to other users (subtractability problem).



To solve the problems of “exclusion” and “subtractability” in the management of common resources it is necessary to answer the questions of controlling access to the resource and of making and enforcing rules and regulations among users to reduce their impact on one another (Berkes et al, 2001).



“If access to a resource is not controlled by some means, sooner or later the resource will be subject to a “tragedy of the commons”

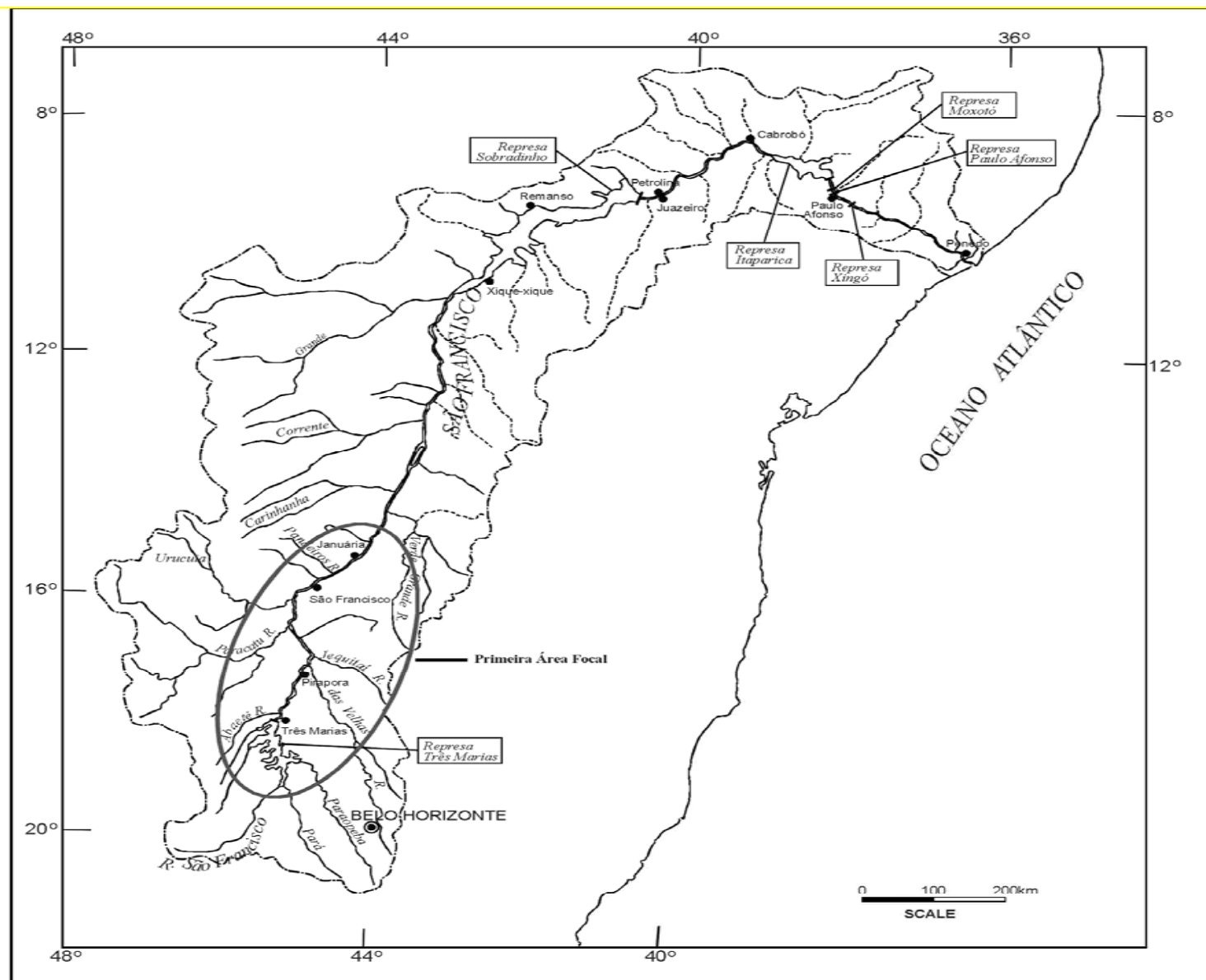
“Management does not work unless there is a set of rules that all users agree to follow”

(Berkes et al., 2001)



Main Participatory Research Objective

To develop partnerships between and among scientific and local ecological knowledge holders, various levels of government institutions, the fishing community and other users, through the establishment of a fishery co-management process that promotes the sustainability of small scale fishery activity in the São Francisco river.



Bacia do Rio São Francisco mostrando a área focal inicial do projeto
(mapa adaptado do Godinho, H. & Sato, Y. - no prelo)



Comparative Fisheries Contexts for Research

Amazon Fisheries: “Fishery Agreements” based on Institutionalization of Informal Local Rules (community based management)

São Francisco River Fisheries:
Informal Local rules (for example: control of fishery access and effort) are not recognized and in some situations are considered illegal – for example: fishing activity in the rapids of Buritizeiro and Pirapora.



Co-management: a process of resource management, that is developed in a dynamic manner over time, based on principles of decentralization, democratization, social empowerment and equity.

Project Process

Capacity Building
through Courses,
Meetings, Workshops,
involving joint Scientific
and Community-based
Research



Autonomy; self-organization;
local communication; gender
equality; more just distribution
of power; decentralized
management systems; on-
going evaluation; learning by
doing



Where are we?

1. Agreement between provincial and federal organs to jointly develop fishery closure laws during spawning period;
2. Creation of two new fishing colonies and discussion about democracy between local fishers and within local institutions;



Where are we?

- 3.Improving and creating leadership – stronger women’s participation;
- 4.Participation of various stakeholders in proposing solutions;
- 5.Government and community agreement on the creation of a Fisheries Working Group at the state level in Minas Gerais.

“Fishes”

- Improved democracy through better community organization, greater gender equity, and autonomy;

- Better organized participation in consultative decision making process;

- Improved government involvement in participatory meetings;

- Involvement of other stakeholders in participatory meetings;

- Creation of networks between community and government institutions at various levels;

- Participatory investigation on current fish mortalities, meetings to discuss stock evaluation processes and better fisheries enforcement strategies;

“Stones”

- Dissatisfaction expressed by some traditional community leaders about new fishermen's organizations and new forms of democracy;
- Limited willingness of government representatives to engage fully in participatory processes and accept decentralization, mainly at the provincial and federal levels;
- Political lobbies led by sport fishermen in the state of Minas Gerais against professional small scale fisheries;
- Unfair irregular enforcement of environmental laws: less enforcement over industry, municipalities, and farmers and more over fishers.