Transdisciplinary research has been brought forward as a means to solve and mitigate real-world problems including fisheries. The Global Research Network Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) is inviting scientists who are interested in ‘transdisciplinary’ research to present their ideas about how to bridge gaps by going between, across and beyond disciplines in working towards ‘blue justice’ for ocean users and sustainability. In this special session, we want to explore the reasons for the lack of transdisciplinarity, the challenges and lessons to apply it, and how this affects fisheries and ocean sustainability under the Bluegrowth agenda, especially how it may exacerbate the marginalization of small-scale fisheries.

Blue justice: A unifying concept for transdisciplinarity towards ‘multi-dimensional’ sustainability
Cornelia Nauen & Aliou Sall

Our dispersive specializations have resulted in a compartmentalization of our approaches while addressing issues related Ocean and the Fishing communities. This weak collaboration between scientists prevent many of them from understanding that fishing communities identify themselves rather as belonging to a socio-halieutical morphology that to an economic sector, explaining why they claim certain traditional rights: free access to coastal zones, cultural services rendered by the ocean, resources, etc. The concept of Blue Commons contributes to strengthening the gap between disciplines and casts new light on these traditional rights. This contribution is to (i) explain in details drivers behind this gap (ii) how this questions our prospects for Ocean sustainability and is worsening fishing communities’ conditions of living and (iv) share an ongoing initiative aiming to promote knowledge co-production with the launching of the SSF academy in Senegal in November 2018.

Democratising inland fisheries in South Africa: the shift from apartheid era legacies to one based on constitutional imperatives
Qurban Rouhani

In 1998, four years after democracy, South Africa enacted the Marine Living Resources Act. For the first time in South Africa’s democratic history, marine small-scale fisheries were recognised and transformed. Twenty-five years after democracy, inland fisheries are yet to undergo this transformation. Currently, the legislation only explicitly recognises recreational anglers, omitting small-scale or traditional fishers. During the pre-democratic era, recreational anglers effectively had exclusive access to state managed water bodies, and to active government support, such as the stocking of alien species of fish sought after by recreational anglers. The historical bias between recreational anglers and small scale-fishers in the freshwater context ran largely along racial lines, a polarising factor that is still at play today. While small-scale fishers may not have not been altogether
excluded from fishing, the legislation only permitted them to use gear and effort allocations reserved for recreational anglers. In 2018, the National Government released a Draft Inland Fisheries Policy, the first time in the democratic era for a National Department to propose a sector that recognised all users and called for equitable access to resources based on constitutional rights. This presentation discusses the historical context of South Africa’s inland fisheries, the current status quo, and how the draft policy could play a part in democratising inland fisheries. A case study - an experimental fishery on Vanderkloof Dam - is presented to highlight some of the key issues. Lastly, some of the lessons learned at Vanderkloof will also be used to make recommendations on how the Inland Fisheries Policy can be strengthened as well as to provide some thoughts developing the capacity of fisher based organisations in both the marine and freshwater sector.

Legal reform and governance transformation for sustainable small-scale fisheries in Thailand
Suvaluck Satumanatpan, Ratana Chuenpagdee

The last decade has seen major changes in policies related to fisheries in Thailand. Some of these changes took place very rapidly due to external pressure, for instance, the so-called ‘yellow card’ from the European Union. The fisheries reform was not taking place in isolation, however. The Government of Thailand was working on many other governing institutions at the same time. Among them was the Promotion of Marine and Coastal Resources Management Act, which came into the effect in 2015 shortly after the enactment of the new Fisheries Act. Since these two legal systems have consequences on the same coastal areas where small-scale fisheries operate, it is imperative to analyse their impacts on the fishery sector. Drawing from interactive governance, we analyse the compatibility and governability of these two institutions, and as a case study, examine the kind of change they induce to a coastal community in Trat province on the east coast of Thailand. It is clear that both governing systems have similar mandate in setting up national committee, provincial level committee, and registered local community organization, resulting in the establishment of diverse and complex institutions. Our study reveals that the relationship among governing actors, as well as between governing actors and resource users need to be improved. Further, communication, meaningful participation and leadership also play crucial role in fishery governability. Vary types of governing interactions need to be fostered and facilitated in order to enhance the overall governance of fisheries and coasts.

Transformations and transdisciplinarity for the sustainability of Mexican fisheries
Maria Jose Espinosa-Romero

Since the Third Convention on the Law of the Sea, most marine fish resources have been entrusted to states to ensure sustainable and equitable use. States thus, have become centrally involved in fisheries governance, and unfortunately have failed at reversing fisheries crisis on their own. New players have been filling management gaps, leading to new paradigms of governance. Theorizing the changing roles of the state across governance modes (hierarchies, co-governance, and self-governance) is necessary and represents the focus of this research. By using Mexican fisheries as a case study and the analysis of the legal framework, state values, state roles, and governance mode
transformations are investigated. Results show that environmental values have been at the core of fisheries governance. These values have been combined with developmental and social equality value.. States have become a multi-tasking, ubiquitous, and imperfect agent acting in hybrid governance systems. Hierarchies are becoming stronger, with some levels of coordination and decentralization. Mechanisms for non-state actors participation have been integrated for fishers to influence institution-making, knowledge production, enforcement and surveillance; and for scientists to participate in knowledge production; other sectors have been excluded (e.g., civil society organizations). Self-governed groups support has decreased over time. State roles and governance transformations are due to international pressures, state capacity, and stakeholder readiness to participate in governing functions. States capacity for transforming fisheries governance could be used in a proactive manner to involve non-state actors in overarching goals of fisheries governance such as sustainability and social justice. In that sense, Comunidad y Biodiversidad is using a transdisciplinary approach, the SSF Guidelines and collaboration with community partners for strengthening state capacity to support fisheries governance and such overarching goals.

**Transdisciplinary Fisheries Sciences for Blue Justice: The Need to Go Between, Across and Beyond**

*Iroshani Madu Galappaththi*

Transdisciplinary research has been brought forward as a means to solve and mitigate real-world problems including fisheries. Yet, in most cases, research projects remain excluding many disciplines and crucial stakeholders and lack institutional frameworks that allow for the share, discussion and integration of ideas and visions for the oceans. In the new context of the “Blue Economy,” which is gaining popularity as observed at the recent conference in Kenya, the looming absence of transdisciplinarity and the lack of integration of different kinds of knowledge threaten the viability of many ocean users, especially small-scale fisheries that constitute the majority. To rectify the situation, Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) Global Research Network is inviting scientists who are interested in 'transdisciplinary' research to present their ideas about how to bridge the gaps by going between, across and beyond disciplines in working towards ‘blue justice’ for ocean users and ocean sustainability. In this special session, we want to explore the reasons for the lack of transdisciplinarity, the challenges and lessons to apply it, and how this affects fisheries and ocean sustainability, especially how it may exacerbate the marginalization of small-scale fisheries. Further, we are interested in learning about methodological approaches, frameworks and initiatives that have been successful at knowledge integration. Ultimately, we will reflect on the lessons learned and develop strategies for concerted efforts as we move towards the Ocean Decade in 2021.