



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

SUMMARY BRIEF

Terminal evaluations
of the projects
“Climate change
adaptation of the Eastern
Caribbean fisheries sector”
(CC4FISH) and
“Developing Organizational
Capacity for Ecosystem
Stewardship and
Livelihoods in Caribbean
Small-Scale Fisheries”
(StewardFish)





1. About the evaluation

- 1 From September 2021 to April 2022, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Office of Evaluation (OED) conducted terminal evaluations of two regional projects that were supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF): *Developing Organizational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries (StewardFish)*; and *Climate Change Adaptation of the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector (CC4FISH)*. The evaluations were carried out by a team of three independent consultants; each evaluation had its unique outputs, but key points of convergence have been identified in the findings, conclusions and recommendations that are applicable to the stakeholders common to both projects, as well as the evaluation users (FAO, regional partner organizations).

Box 1 • Lessons from the joint evaluation approach

A joint approach increases efficiency in the use of time and resources for all parties, especially where there are common institutional partners and beneficiaries. The evaluation team capitalized on their complementary thematic and geographic experiences; each evaluator was able to contribute insight to both projects. By having a comparison, the joint evaluations allowed deeper understanding of nuances and identification of emergent lessons and recommendations.

2. Overview of the projects

- 2 The CC4Fish project aimed to increase resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts in the Eastern Caribbean fisheries sector through awareness building about climate change impacts on the fisheries sector, efforts towards increasing the resilience of fisherfolk and aquaculturists to climate change and supporting the mainstreaming of climate change in fisheries governance. The StewardFish project contributes to the implementation of the CLME+ Strategic Action Programme (SAP)¹ within Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Member States by empowering fisherfolk throughout fisheries value chains to engage in living marine resource management, decision-making processes, and sustainable livelihoods with strengthened institutional capacity of fisherfolk organizations and national fisheries authorities.
- 3 FAO served as the implementing and executing agency with the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) as one of the co-executing agencies of both projects, which together were implemented in 11 Caribbean Small Island Developing States (Table 1). Countries common to both projects were Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Other project details are given in Table 1.

Table 1 • Project scope and executing partners

| FEATURES | CC4Fish | StewardFish |
|--|---|---|
| Grant amount (GEF) | USD 5 460 000 | USD 1 776 484 |
| Duration | January 2017–August 2022 | May 2018–June 2022 |
| Main project participants who benefitted from project activities | Fisherfolk, aquaculturists, coastal communities | National and primary fisherfolk organisations, national fisheries authorities |
| Letters of agreement (LOA) | Global and regional partners and organizations, and participating national governments | Regional partners |
| Participating countries | Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago | Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines |
| Executing partners | | |
| National fisheries authorities | ✓ | |
| Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) | | ✓ |
| University of the West Indies Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (UWI/ CERMES) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Other key participating partner | | |
| UWI/Caribbean ICT Research Programme (CIRP) | ✓ | ✓ |

¹ Politically-endorsed ten-year SAP for the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+).





Box 2 • The terminal evaluations

Both terminal evaluations were accountability- and learning-oriented, with the objectives of assessing the extent of the effectiveness of the results, their sustainability and potential long-term impact and identifying lessons learned and recommendations for similarly focused projects. The evaluations were based on the GEF evaluation criteria, as indicated in Figure 1. Data was collected from various sources including key informant interviews, project documentation, outcome mapping, and an electronic survey. Travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic precluded field visits by the evaluators and all interviews were conducted using virtual platforms.

Figure 1 • GEF evaluation criteria ratings for the CC4Fish and StewardFish projects



Notes: HS: Highly Satisfactory; S: Satisfactory; MS: Moderately Satisfactory; MU: Moderately Unsatisfactory; U: Unsatisfactory; HU: Highly Unsatisfactory.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation teams.

3. Key findings

Finding 1. Both projects performed well given the high degree of internal complexity in addition to the implementation challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme natural events.

- 4 Consideration must be given to the fact that CC4Fish was a larger and more complex project than StewardFish, in terms of the thematic scope, execution arrangements and administrative requirements. Based on the GEF evaluation criteria, overall performance of both projects was rated satisfactory. StewardFish consistently had a higher proportion of satisfactory and highly satisfactory ratings (93 percent combined compared to 50 percent for CC4Fish) while CC4Fish had a higher proportion of moderately satisfactory ratings (43 percent compared to 7 percent for StewardFish) in addition to the only moderately unsatisfactory rating (gender and other equity dimensions). Neither of the projects received any unsatisfactory and highly unsatisfactory ratings. StewardFish's higher scores for efficiency, execution and financial management may be attributed in part to differences in the institutional arrangements for project execution (for example, the varying degrees of national project execution, hampered in some by various factors including delay in release of project funds held in national consolidated funds).

"A good national coordinator, good coordination of activities, having someone on the ground who knew the fishers well were key to execution of activities in the countries" (interview, CC4Fish).

Finding 2. Both projects are strongly aligned with the countries' priorities and needs as well as with FAO strategic objectives and the GEF International Waters and Climate Change Adaptation focal areas.

- 5 The participating countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts and have low adaptive capacity. The fisheries sector is faced with declining catches arising from climate change impacts coupled with unsustainable fishing practices and ecosystem degradation. Both projects contributed to addressing important gaps and barriers related to climate change adaptation (CCA) and ecosystem stewardship in the countries through a package of key activities including: training sessions in several thematic areas (e.g. safety at sea, ecosystem approach to fisheries management, information and communication technology [ICT], business skills, leadership skills, climate-smart aquaponics, seafood safety), development of sargassum and fisheries management plans and a regional code of conduct, pilot projects in ecosystem stewardship and institutional strengthening, rehabilitation of aquaculture facilities, and provision of ICT, safety-at-sea, aquaculture equipment and office furniture.

Finding 3. Ensuring realistic objectives and measurable indicators during the project design stage is fundamental to the project's success. Feedback loops and flexibility in re-design should be considered in order to adjust and adapt objectives, outcomes and activities to ever-changing contexts and realities.

- 6 CC4Fish was rated satisfactory and StewardFish moderately satisfactory in project design and readiness. The CC4Fish project was pioneering but over-ambitious in terms of the large number of countries and activities, the nature of some activities, and the limited budget and timeframe. Finetuning outcomes and indicators after project initiation, and in a collaborative and learning-oriented process, could help ensure even more relevant, tailored and achievable results. However, much effort was placed on building capacity through trainings, technical support and concrete inputs (i.e. VHF radios), setting the stage for strengthened organizations. Fisherfolk have ambitious visions of how they would like to build upon these strategies, which should be part of ongoing conversations with governments and donors.





Finding 4. Strengthened capacity and awareness related to climate change adaptation, fisheries governance and ecosystem stewardship; leadership development; and improved relationship between fisherfolk and stakeholders in fisheries and other public sectors were some of the common outcomes supported by the projects, which were reinforced by concrete outputs such as fisheries management plans, provision of office and safety-at-sea equipment to fisherfolk, and rehabilitated aquaculture facilities.

- 7 Effectiveness was rated satisfactory for both projects, with almost all the planned outputs achieved, although the level of completion of activities varied among the countries. For both projects, some targets were exceeded, for example, with respect to the number of individuals benefitting from project interventions. Among the intangible results are strengthened fisherfolk and organisational capacity of fisherfolk organizations and national fisheries authorities in various areas (e.g., ICT, fisheries governance, leadership, communication and visibility, safety at sea, emergency response, climate-smart aquaculture, ecosystem approach to fisheries [EAF], business skills), and increased stakeholder knowledge and awareness in areas such as climate change adaptation, ecosystem stewardship, and involvement of women in leadership roles.

Box 3 • Examples of results

StewardFish

- i. establishment of the CNFO Caribbean Leadership Institute (CLI);
- ii. development of Regional Code of Conduct for Caribbean Fisheries;
- iii. fish silage production (pilot); and
- iv. Shock Responsive Social Protection Strat Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

CC4Fish

- i. development of sargassum and fisheries management plans;
- ii. rehabilitation or development of new aquaculture facilities;
- iii. sea moss harvesting;
- iv. safety-at-sea training and provision of equipment for fisherfolk;
- v. development of ICT training materials for fisherfolk and training of 1 300 fishers in ICT to improve SAS; and
- vi. improved disaster risk management of the fisheries sector.

- 8 Some transformations and a departure from 'business-as-usual' are evident, for example, changes in awareness and behaviour regarding CCA, safety at sea, ecosystem stewardship, and involvement of women in fisherfolk organizations. Unexpected positive results include stronger collaborative relationship among executing partners; improved level of trust between national fisheries authorities and fisherfolk; enhanced interaction of the public and private fisheries sector with a broader group of stakeholders; and strengthened capacity of fisherfolk to use virtual communication platforms. The investment in relationship building and creating connections and spaces for active participating, shifted projects' perceptions away from working with 'passive beneficiaries' to that of engaging in co-collaboration with a diverse landscape of actors.

"Workshops and courses under the project have helped fishers to understand EAF, fishers are taking things more seriously, are more keenly aware" (interview, Stewardfish).

"Small grants were useful and there are some shining examples of what they can do if the fisherfolk have the resources...they were able to pull through and complete activities despite a volcanic eruption and COVID" (interview, Stewardfish).

Finding 5. Institutional arrangements for project execution affect the efficiency of projects; there is an efficiency win when FAO is both the implementing and executing partner, although it must also be recognized that implementation efficiency is also enhanced by competent regional organizations.

- 9 Efficiency was moderately satisfactory for CC4Fish and satisfactory for StewardFish. This difference may be partly attributed to the institutional arrangements for project execution. While LOAs were established with regional partners for both projects, CC4Fish had their majority of LOAs with national governments, which added another layer of administrative complexity. In the case of the latter, execution was hampered in some countries by various internal factors including limited institutional capacity, staffing variability, and delay in release of project funds held in consolidated national funds. The larger size and complexity of CC4Fish, as mentioned above, might have also negatively affected efficiency.

Finding 6. Regional organizations and national governments are the gatekeepers to ensure that project results are taken up and sustained, policies and management plans are implemented, and knowledge sharing with fisherfolk and other relevant agencies and institutions takes place beyond the life of the projects.

- 10 For both projects, sustainability was rated as moderately likely, with moderate environmental, socio-political and institutional risks but substantial financial risks. Each project has left an enormous legacy of tangible and intangible results, constituting a strong foundation for sustainability. However, although the project documents describe the potential for sustainability, no exit strategy was developed for StewardFish and that for CC4Fish came only towards the end of the project. The national fisheries authorities and regional partners have a major role in sustaining the project's results by mainstreaming/embedding them into their respective work programmes and projects and mobilizing additional financial resources. The CNFO and its CNFO Leadership Institute (CLI) have become key players in creating a critical mass for 'transformation' in thematic areas covered by both projects. There is high potential for cross-fertilization among the projects' beneficiaries and partners to share knowledge and experiences and amplify their results for sustainability, but within a realistic resource mobilization framework. For example, improved health of fish stocks and marine ecosystems resulting from better stewardship will contribute to greater resilience of ecosystems and fisherfolk to climate change impacts, particularly if stewardship is prioritized in national fisheries authorities, and reinforced in relevant upcoming projects, and amongst regional partners.

"The role of CNFO was heightened due to going online...CNFO Caribbean Leadership Institute has strengthened partnerships among regional organisations and fisherfolk" (interview, StewardFish).

Finding 7. The partnerships that were cultivated within both projects were a key success factor affecting projects' performance and provide fertile ground for continuing important fisheries governance and stewardship and climate change adaptation work in the region, thus potentially contributing to sustainability.

- 11 Partnerships and stakeholder engagement was rated highly satisfactory for both projects. Undoubtedly, strategic partnerships and strong stakeholder engagement were instrumental in successful delivery. A highly participatory approach was adopted from the design stage throughout project execution, which considered the needs of the key beneficiaries and capacities of the executing partners, who joined forces in supporting fisherfolk and other actors of the value chain. The projects created a unique 'ecosystem' of partnerships with



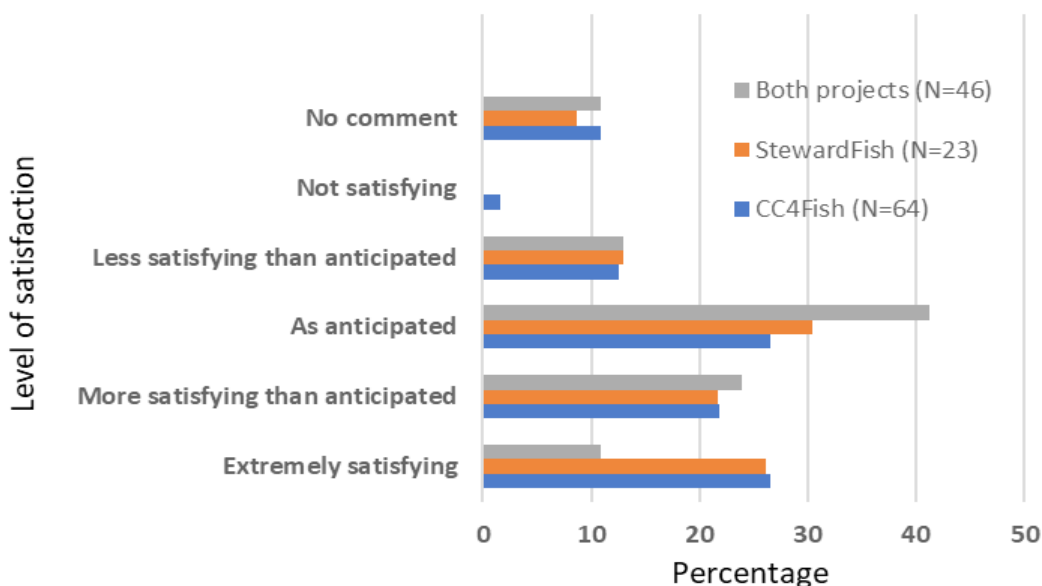


executing partners and 'satellite stakeholders' (some for the first time). Among these were national fisheries authorities and other marine-related state agencies such as coast guard and marine police, trade-related intergovernmental organisations, fisherfolk organisations, private sector, disaster management authorities, telecommunications companies, and academic, research and vocational institutions. However, greater involvement of other state agencies (e.g., those responsible for women, labour, and social security) was desirable.

- 12 The level of satisfaction of stakeholders of each project and common stakeholders of the two projects is illustrated in Figure 2. The level of satisfaction was between 'as anticipated' to 'extremely satisfying' for most respondents.

"The bringing together of disaster management personnel and fisheries personnel at the same forum to raise awareness and to put mechanisms in place for the fisheries sector to be included in Post Disaster Needs Assessment" was a significant change brought about by the project" (interview, CC4Fish).

Figure 2. • CC4Fish and StewardFish terminal evaluation electronic survey among stakeholders



Notes: N= number of respondents.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation teams based on responses to an e-survey.

Finding 8. Support from FAO, collaboration amongst different partners and adaptability were common traits contributing to both projects' successes.

- 13 Other success factors affecting positive project performance included quality technical backstopping from FAO and the regional executing arrangements. Component partners displayed a high degree of adaptability to successfully deliver their respective outputs, which in general were of a high quality and within budget. The projects are noteworthy examples of how multi-country, multi-activity projects can overcome fragmentation and challenges with the appropriate combination of executing partners and adaptive management approaches.
- 14 In terms of gender and equity, while StewardFish was rated highly satisfactory, working consistently with a cadre of women who actively participated throughout the project in various activities and instigated attitudinal changes in fisherfolk regarding women in leadership roles, CC4Fish did not mainstream gender to the same degree.

4. Recommendations

- 15 The evaluations made a number of recommendations for different audiences. The following is a summary combining the key recommendations that are pertinent to the two projects.

4.1 To FAO and executing partners

Recommendation 1. FAO, national governments and regional partners should continue supporting CCA interventions in the fisheries sector and strengthening fisherfolk organizations in governance, leadership and ecosystem stewardship. Common regional partners for execution of multiple projects and for disbursement of project funds (e.g., microgrants) to project beneficiaries at the national level is an efficient and effective model to replicate.

Recommendation 2. Continue to build relationships with, and strengthen capacity of, those entities, including satellite stakeholders who can uptake and outscale the positive results of the project, including continued training (i.e. through CLI, vis-à-vis strengthened partnerships) and mentorship and support to fisherfolk organizations, fisherfolk and national fisheries authorities through sustainable financing. Continuous engagement with fishers, with the provision of incentives, help to keep them involved to ensure uptake of new practices.

Recommendation 3. Continue to tweak a knowledge management strategy that corresponds to and helps substantiate and promote the rich body of evidence that projects are producing through their outputs, so that these can be used for further socialization, partnership building and leadership creation, through the timely and targeted dissemination of knowledge products.

Recommendation 4. The process initiated under the projects to empower women should be continued and strengthened in future initiatives, and gender perspectives mainstreamed into the work of national fisheries authorities and partner organizations and in all stages of future project development and implementation. For example, the knowledge gained through the projects need to be consolidated and applied to address gender issues in the fisheries sector, including the creation of opportunities to strengthen women's participation in the value chain and decision-making processes.

Recommendation 5. Support practical and usable national level monitoring and evaluation of progress towards effective fisheries governance and stewardship.

4.2 To FAO and GEF

Recommendation 6. Determine the appropriate scope for large-scale projects, giving due consideration to the governance and geography of partner countries in organizing operational arrangements at national levels, promoting flexibility and agility in project management, as well as replenishing the GEF Special Climate Change Fund to tackle the multiple facets of CCA.

Recommendation 7. Ensuring that the scope of monitoring through the GEF core indicators allows reporting on project outcomes, beyond just (output) numbers. Project-specific non-core indicators that adequately capture outcomes should be systematically developed in project results frameworks.

4.3 To FAO and regional organizations

Recommendation 8. Continue to nurture multi-sectoral partnerships across multiple groups of stakeholders, facilitating the creation and sustainability of an ecosystem of stakeholders. Other relevant state agencies (related to gender, labour, social security ministries) should become more purposefully involved in activities related to sustainable livelihoods, decent work, access to insurance, security of person and property, among others.





© FAO/J. Sylvester



© FAO/I. Monnerau



© FAO



© FAO/T. Ferary



© FAO/I. Monnerau

Office of Evaluation
E-mail: evaluation@fao.org
Web address: www.fao.org/evaluation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy

Cover photograph: © FAO/I. Monnerau



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/) licence

© FAO, 2022
CC2477EN/1/09.22