



## COMMISSION OF SMALL SCALE, ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

### XVII SESSION

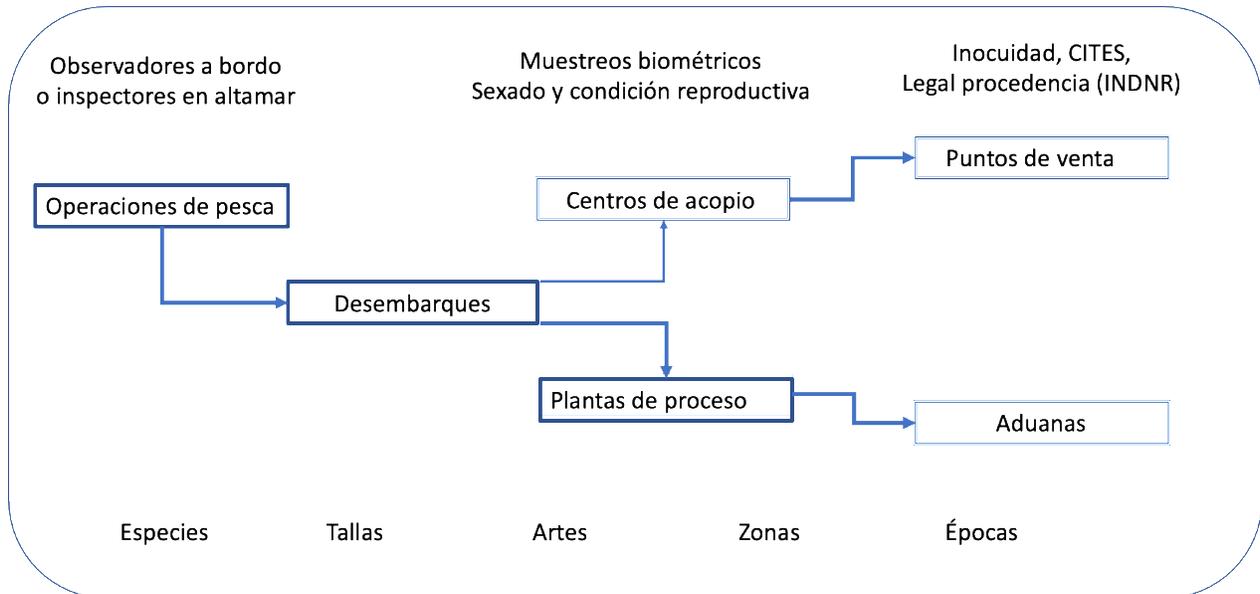
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### IMPORTANCE OF THE CONSOLIDATION OF NATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTELLIGENT USE OF BIOLOGICAL AND FISHERY INFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHERY RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

#### Introduction

The basis for sustainable fisheries management is indeed the regular scientific assessment of the state of exploited stocks. Management measures that limit fishing efforts, fishing areas and seasonality, minimum catch size to ensure reproduction and recruitment, fishing quotas and appropriate fishing gear, should all contribute to not exceeding the limits established by biological reference points that guarantee the sustainability of resources and their trophic interaction with other species in the ecosystem.

However, this regular monitoring of fish stocks requires technology, scientific capacity and sufficient human and financial resources, mainly to collect direct and indirect data at various stages of the production-processing-distribution-marketing chain (Figure 1), which very often are not a priority in government budgets, particularly in small economies.



**Figure 1. Fisheries and biological data collection points and type of information required for fisheries management.**

National systems for collecting, analysing, interpreting and applying biological and fisheries information to fisheries management reveal institutional weaknesses in many countries, that prevent adequate decision-making processes in fisheries management. These weaknesses, together with the lack of robust systems for monitoring the application of management measures, encourage illegal fishing, overfishing and, eventually, the collapse of fisheries.

The Commission, through FAO, has carried out several actions over the last few years to strengthen the institutional capacities of member countries, including training courses on methods for fisheries resource assessment in contexts of limited data, through South-South Cooperation including an oceanographic-fisheries research campaign financed by the Government of Mexico in support of Central American countries, and practical guides for both marine and inland fisheries.

While substantive progress is shown in some countries with advanced resource assessment and monitoring systems, many member countries of the Commission still exhibit significant weaknesses. This situation is more pronounced in inland fisheries, where monitoring is even more incipient and, in some cases, nonexistent.

It is therefore essential to address in a comprehensive manner and with a regional perspective, the need to strengthen the fisheries monitoring systems, specifically those related to shared resources, promoting the participation of resource users, in order to also promote co-management schemes.