



STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES BY PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE FISHING PRACTICES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The six countries targeted by the project – Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago – share water and marine resources in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Shrimp/bottom trawl fisheries constitute an important part of the total marine fisheries economy in the project countries, contributing to employment, local income, food security and foreign exchange earnings.

Bottom trawling is a type of fishing that has a significant impact upon ecosystems and has generated social conflicts in areas in which it operates. In this context, the project was created with the objective of contributing to reducing the negative ecosystem and social impacts, and to achieve a more sustainable shrimp trawl fishery through both the application of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and co-management for the active participation of stakeholders. It also planned to promote the improvement and diversification of the livelihoods of coastal communities in order to strengthen resilience and food security.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project was structured around the following four main components: (i) improvement of institutional and regulatory frameworks for shrimp trawling, (ii) strengthening bycatch management and responsible trawling practices, (iii) promoting sustainable and equitable livelihoods and diversification and (iv) monitoring project progress and disseminating information.

The project created or updated laws and policies to include the EAF, co-management and bycatch management, with all target countries having finalized or in the process of finalizing a management plan for fisheries with an ecosystem approach. Data for decision-making, both biological and socio-economic, was generated, including aspects such as baseline studies of shrimp trawl fisheries bycatch and characterization of the shrimp fishery value chain and its socio economic importance.

The efficiency of technological measures and spatial/temporal delimitations for bycatch reduction was tested and identified, while awareness was raised among decision-makers and stakeholders on the EAF and its importance in reducing environmental impact.

In addition, alternative livelihoods and new ways of using and adding value to the bycatch were explored and established, and a favourable environment created for dialogue among stakeholders.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget
USD 5 800 000

Duration
July 2015 – February 2022

Resource Partner
Global Environment Facility

Partners
Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (IFRFEMER), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), national fisheries authorities, research institutes and civil society organizations

Beneficiaries
Fisherfolk and their organizations, local communities organizations, universities and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

IMPACT

The desired impact of the project was to reduce the negative ecosystem impact and achieve more sustainable shrimp/bottom trawl fisheries in the region through implementation of an EAF, including bycatch and habitat impact management, and to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities through promotion of responsible fishing practices and livelihoods enhancement and diversification, contributing to food security and poverty eradication.

ACTIVITIES

- All six target countries presented bycatch and discard guidelines. Two countries saw the guidelines approved as legal regulations, while four are waiting approval for their incorporation.
- Regional strategy for shrimp/bottom trawl fisheries and bycatch management agreed and under initial implementation.
- Trawl fishery regulations reviewed in five of the six countries. Final recommendations are under review in Colombia, while Trinidad and Tobago laid out a new Fisheries Management Bill in the country's House of Representatives. Suriname included trawling monitoring provisions in its Coast Guard Act and included bycatch management measures in the draft Fisheries Act submitted to the Ministry.
- Institutional structures for EAF and co-management of shrimp/bottom trawl fisheries and bycatch formalized in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Suriname and informal working group active in Trinidad and Tobago.
- New bycatch and monitoring information systems implemented in Costa Rica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, and an observer programme and fishery monitoring programme in Mexico completed and transferred to the Government.
- Gear tests completed in 11 pilot fisheries in the six countries, with recommendations provided.
- Local EAF capacity-building workshops and trainings were completed in all six countries, with the involvement of stakeholders and government staff. This output was critical in Brazil, where a national EAF training workshop led to a considerable rise in the number of stakeholders interested in the project.
- National management plans operational in Brazil (shrimp fishery management plan), Colombia (national bycatch management plan) and Suriname (national fisheries management plan 2021-2025 updated and validated with stakeholders).
- Role of women evaluated in pilot sites in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Trinidad and Tobago through value chain analysis and socio-economic studies.
- Community organizations strengthened, for instance leading to peer-to-peer exchanges in Costa Rica and to the formation and legal establishment of five fisher organizations in Suriname.

Project Code

FAO: GCP/RLA/201/GFF
Donor: 5304

Project Title

Sustainable management of bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean trawl fisheries (REBYC-II LAC)

Contact

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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