

# Technical Assistance To Small-Scale Fisheries in the Western Central Atlantic through the UNDP/FAO WECAF Project

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## THE WECAF PROJECT

The WECAF Project (INT/77/016) is an outgrowth of the WECAF Commission established by the FAO Council in November 1973 for the development of fisheries in the Western Central Atlantic and which held its first meeting in Trinidad in October 1975.

The area of this Project covers all the marine waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and a large part of the Atlantic down to 10° S Latitude, which roughly corresponds to fishing area number 31 established by FAO for the compilation of fishery statistics (Fig. 1). Countries with seabords in the area include the U.S.A., Mexico, Central America (except El Salvador), Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana, Brazil, and all the islands of the Caribbean.

The participants in the WECAF Project are largely members of the WECAF Commission, although participation is open to non-member countries who either utilize the living resources of the region or who assist countries of the region with the development of their fisheries. At present there are 23 participating countries, all of which are situated in the area. In time, it is expected that 30 countries in all will participate.

## OBJECTIVES

### Long-term Objectives

The purpose of the Project in the long run is to bring about the most effective use of the fishery resources of the WECAF area through: the development of fisheries of under-exploited stocks, especially those accessible to small-scale fishermen; the promotion of the better use of existing catches and of appropriate management actions for stocks that are heavily exploited.

### Immediate Objectives

To act as a coordinating mechanism, to advise on the development of appropriate fishery policies and their harmonization at all levels, from the national to the inter-regional, and to facilitate international assistance for the attainment of these aims. In particular, these objectives are:

- 1) Resource exploitation and utilization: (a.) To assist in the identification and formulation of national and/or regional projects for the development of fisheries of under-exploited stocks, especially those that can support increased

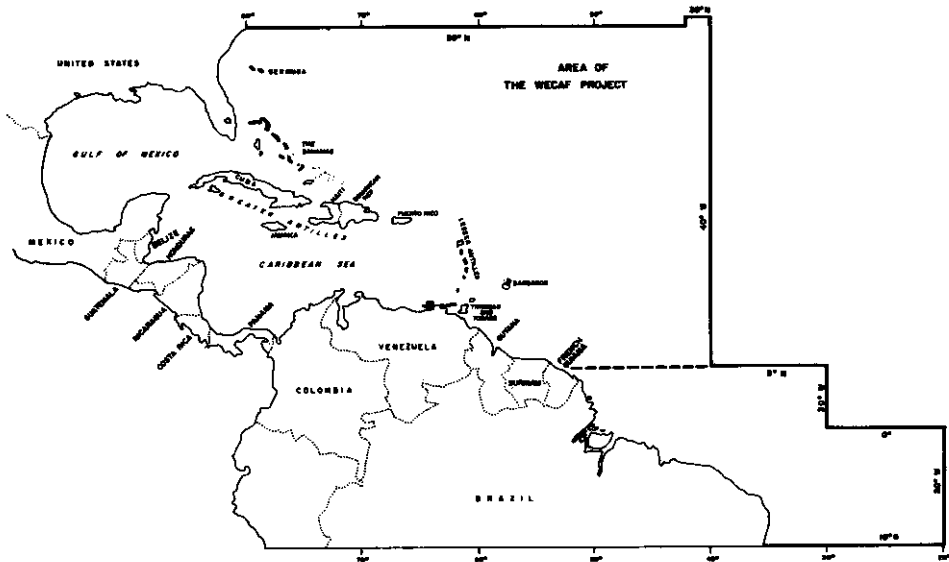


Figure 1. The WECAF Commission area covers the waters of the Project area lying north of 5° North latitude (see dotted line).

catches by small-scale fishermen, and to advise governments on appropriate measures to be adopted for the development of these fisheries. (b.) To assist small-scale fishermen to increase and improve the quality of their catches through the introduction and demonstration of improved or new fishing methods, vessels, gear, and equipment, to the extent that the resources can withstand an increase in production, and to improve post-harvesting techniques both on board fishing vessels and ashore. (c.) To assist governments and the private fishery sector in identifying opportunities for the improvement and development of all sectors of the industry and to seek sources of assistance for feasibility studies and investment. Particular items to receive attention include the development of new or improved fishing vessels and gear, planning better harbors and other shore infrastructure, and assistance in processing and marketing. (d.) To assist in the identification and formulation of coastal aquaculture projects. (e.) To provide member countries with improved statistics of fish processing, exports, imports, domestic distribution, and consumption, prices, and cost and earnings in fishing and aquaculture operations. (f.) To assist countries in formulating plans for the development and management of fisheries that take into account the limits set by the resources and the constraints arising from the exploitation of the same resource by more than one country. (g.) To advise and assist in the formulation of principles and techniques for the management of shrimp fisheries to be implemented under appropriate national and multi-national arrangements.

- 2) Resource monitoring: (a.) To provide assistance to coastal countries concerned with the improvement of fishery statistics, e.g., by training biologists and statisticians, and in introducing appropriate and effective techniques for data collection and compilation. (b.) To collaborate with non-coastal countries fishing in the area, as well as with intergovernmental bodies such as, for example, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), in assembling the data necessary for the evaluation of the stocks of the area. (c.) To ensure the regional compilation, analysis and publication of the data referred to in (a) and (b). (d.) To assist in the promotion, organization and coordination of regional research activities, especially (i) To survey and appraise demersal and pelagic stocks and identify possibilities for development (ii) To assess and monitor the populations of shrimp and other heavily fished stocks.
- 3) Fishery Administration and Legislation: (a.) To assist in the strengthening of fishery administration in general and, in particular, national fishery research and development institutions. (b.) To assist in the formulation of fishery legislation designed to ensure the most effective use of existing fishery resources.
- 4) Training: To support directly or through bilateral or other arrangements training at all levels in all fishery sectors.

#### Project Activities

The activities to be carried out by the Project for the realization of the objectives described above, fall into three categories: (a.) area-wide inter-regional programs designed to deal with problems concerned with the entire WECAF area; (b.) sub-regional programs for particular groups of countries having common problems; and (c.) activities directed to individual countries related to sub-regional or regional development in the area.

The first two categories, namely, those covering area-wide inter-regional programs and sub-regional or group country programs, will include the following activities: the evaluation and monitoring of fishery resources, particularly in cooperation with other research entities in the region, for example, fishery institutes, universities, intergovernmental and international organizations, etc.; the improvement of fishery statistics and their compilation and distribution throughout the region; research on fish processing and utilization, e.g., the utilization of fish discards, especially the shrimp by-catches; seminars, training centers and workshops on a variety of subjects such as have been developed in other regional projects like the International Indian Ocean Fishery Survey and Development Program (IOFP), the Development of Fisheries in the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) and the South China Sea Fisheries Development and Coordinating Program (SCSP), in particular: management of fishery enterprises; government policies for stimulating fishery developments; resource evaluation; fishery management and legislation; fishery cooperatives and their management; consumer education and promotion; training of fishermen, extension workers and administrators.

With respect to Project activities directed at individual countries, these will consist of advice to governments, institutions and fishery enterprises on fishery development programs including in particular: choice of fishing gear, equipment, and vessels; fish processing and handling, including quality control; marketing; training and education; management of private and public fishery enterprises; improvement of fishery statistics; formulation of fishery legislation and policies; and the development of adequate fishery extension services.

#### SMALL SCALE FISHERY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In view of the importance of small-scale or artisanal type fisheries in the WECAF area, both in terms of fish supply and employment, the Project has accorded high priority to the development of this sector of the industry. Special efforts will therefore be made to overcome the existing constraints to development presented by inefficient fishing operations and the scattered and ineffective nature of landing facilities and marketing systems, by introducing improved fishing vessels, gear and equipment and better handling, processing, distribution, and marketing facilities.

In view of the across-the-board needs of this sector of the industry and considering the ineffectiveness of past attempts at uplifting the level of efficiency of small-scale fisheries by piecemeal, *ad hoc* and often uncoordinated programs, an integrated approach to the solution of these problems is to be implemented by the Project. Considering as well the size of the WECAF area, and the fact that the problems cannot be tackled effectively everywhere at the same time, a pilot project approach will be employed concentrating on carefully selected countries or states having a potential for development, and the results applied in other areas having similar fishery situations. Furthermore, in order to avoid duplication of effort in an area where many agencies and entities are involved in fishery development activities – often appearing to be in competition with each other – special efforts will be made to develop the small-scale fishery program in cooperation with all other entities involved in providing assistance to this sector of the industry.

The program to be implemented and, in fact, which is in advanced stage of preparation, is being developed with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It is envisaged that it will be financed wholly by this agency but executed by FAO through the framework of the WECAF Project.

The program is considered a sub-project of WECAF entitled, "The Development and Demonstration of Advanced Small-Scale Fishing." In brief, the objectives are the following:

#### Long-Term Objectives

To improve the socio-economic level of small-scale fishermen by increasing their catches and improving the quality of fish landed for local consumption and export, through the introduction and demonstration of improved or new fishing methods, vessels, gear, and equipment, and improved post-harvesting techniques at sea and on shore.

### Immediate Objectives

- 1) To demonstrate and introduce modern fishing techniques for harvesting known stocks of snappers, groupers, inshore pelagic species and others.
- 2) To identify and demonstrate opportunities for expanding fishing operations to under-exploited resources.
- 3) To improve fish handling on board vessels as well as after landing.
- 4) To improve fish distribution and marketing practices.
- 5) To provide on-the-job training, and through workshops, on fishing methods and gear, fishing boat and engine maintenance, and fish handling and processing.
- 6) To establish the basis for a long-range development policy and program which can ensure the improvement and expansion of small-scale fisheries in the WECAF area.

The first step in the realization of these objectives is the selection of suitable sites for the implementation of the program envisaged. This will be the task of a project formulation mission which is to be fielded as early as possible in 1978. Two or more sites will be selected, primarily on the basis of resource availability, suitable natural facilities, and availability of support staff.

#### *The Sub-Project Work Plan*

The sub-project will have a preparatory phase of about 1 year to be followed by an operational phase of 2 to 4 years, depending on the success of the undertaking.

During the preparatory phase the sites of the pilot demonstration units will be selected, the boats and auxiliary equipment of a type suitable for ready adoption by local fishermen will be procured, and improvements and innovations of local fishing methods and gear will be identified and tested.

This will be followed by the operational phase during which increasing emphasis will be placed on the practical demonstration of improved and new fishing methods and gear at the sites of the units and, as appropriate, at other localities in the Project area. In particular the activities will include: (a) Initiate tests on the improvement of local fishing methods and gear; (b) Carry out practical demonstrations of the benefits to be derived from these innovations; (c) Provide *ad hoc* technical assistance at the request of participating governments; (d) Investigate and demonstrate opportunities for expanding fishing operations to under-exploited areas; (e) Carry out studies of the economics of the new types of fishing operations introduced; (f) Accelerate development by training counterparts to initiate extension activities in their countries; (g) Disseminate new technology and the results of project activities through a series of workshops and other suitable systems to be established by the WECAF Project as appropriate.

#### *Sub-Project Staff*

INTERNATIONAL – At each demonstration unit to be selected an international staff will be recruited consisting of two masterfishermen, one engine operator/mechanic and one fish handling and distribution specialist. The master-

fishermen will be experienced in operating small multi-purpose boats utilizing small-scale fishing techniques. They will also have teaching and training experience. The engine operators/mechanics will have broad experience in the operation, maintenance, and repair of outboard and inboard marine engines and will also be capable of installing marine engines and related equipment. They will have teaching and training experience. The fish handling and distribution specialists will be competent to assist in the setting up of a pilot demonstration plant (at each site) for handling, storing, grading, and distribution of fresh fish and simply preserved fishery products, advise on their efficient operation and provide training for fishermen, processors, and other personnel in this field of competence.

The above experts will be supported by the staff and consultants of the WECAF Project, especially in the fields of fishery economics, marketing, and processing technology.

**NATIONAL AND REGIONAL** – The host governments will be called upon to provide liaison officers to work directly with the Program Leader of WECAF and the leaders of the demonstration units concerning the local operation of the pilot projects. Local crews and other supporting staff will also be supplied by the host governments.

It will also be incumbent upon the host governments to provide counterpart staff in the fields of fishing gear and methods, engine operation and maintenance, and fish handling. Each international specialist should have at least two counterparts during the entire life of the demonstration units. Counterparts would also be accepted from other WECAF member countries – and this will be encouraged – who would serve in rotation to provide the maximum diffusion of training and permit the dissemination of project ideas and results throughout the region. Appropriate criteria for the selection of counterparts and the duration of their training will be determined prior to the operational phase of the program.

### *Sub-Project Equipment*

Each demonstration unit will be supplied with the following equipment from external sources of funding: two prototype motorized fishing boats, workshop equipment, fishing gear, material and equipment, fish processing materials and equipment, an ice plant with cold store, spares and replacement equipment, office materials and equipment, as well as fuel, lubricants and insurance.

### *Host Government Contribution*

The host governments will be required to invoke all measures necessary to facilitate the operation of the demonstration units and assist their staff in obtaining such services and facilities as they may require to fulfil their tasks. These will specifically include: the use of docking facilities, workshops, store and office space, living accommodation for trainees and duty-free fuel. These contributions do not imply that any cash transactions will be necessary but, rather, that the necessary services and facilities will be made available within the budgets of the governmental agencies concerned.

## **Asistencia Inter-regional del PNUD/FAO a la Industria Pesquera del Caribe**

### **RESUMEN**

Se relata brevemente el origen, alcance, objetivo y plan de acción del Proyecto Inter-regional PNUD/FAO para el Desarrollo de la Pesca en el Atlántico Centro-Occidental (WECAF), junto con una descripción del programa especial o sub-proyecto que se está preparando para el desarrollo y la demostración de técnicas avanzadas de pesca en pequeña escala en la zona del Atlántico Centro-Occidental.