

**Fisheries and Aquaculture Activities
of the Agency for International
Development in the Caribbean**

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The Agency for International Development (AID) administers most of the foreign economic assistance programs of the U.S.A. The Administrator of AID also serves as the principal adviser to the President and the Secretary of State on foreign economic growth and development. Economic aid plays an important role in U.S. foreign policy. It is considered essential to the economic, political and security interests of the United States. AID was created by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The U.S. Congress authorizes the Agency's programs and annually appropriates funds to carry out those programs. AID's headquarters are located in Washington, D.C. and consist of several Central Bureaus and four Regional Bureaus: Africa, Asia, the Near East and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Agency's basic purpose is to help people in the economically developing countries acquire the knowledge and resources to build the social, economic and political institutions necessary for a better life. Programs are carried out only in countries that have requested assistance. Development assistance in the form of loans and grants aims at improving the quality of life of the poorest people in less developed countries, through programs in agriculture, rural development, nutrition, family planning, health, education and human resources, energy and science and technology. Through an inter-agency agreement, the National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides administrative staff support and technical expertise in fisheries to the Office of Agriculture in AID's Bureau for Science and Technology. Fisheries biologists are detailed to AID on a long-term basis.

ACTIVITIES IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

Past Activities

The earliest efforts of U.S. foreign assistance in fisheries in Latin America and the Caribbean occurred in the late 1940's. These included stocking lakes, particularly in South America and marketing freshwater and marine fish.

Beginning in the early 1960's, AID funded a number of fisheries projects in the Caribbean. These projects varied in size and were located in a number of countries including Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Panama. Some examples of these efforts are: exploratory fishing for spiny lobster by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in Panama; stock assessment,

socio-economics, fisheries technology, and related multi-disciplinary research conducted by the International Center for Marine Resources Development of the University of Rhode Island in Central America; and the Conference on the Development of Small-Scale Fisheries in the Caribbean, funded by a grant from AID to the University of Miami, and held in conjunction with the 30th Annual GCFI meetings in Cartagena in 1977.

Present Activities

AID is presently funding four regular bilateral fisheries projects in the Caribbean region. As it happens they are all in the area of freshwater aquaculture, using tilapia and other species to attempt to increase the availability of low-cost food fish in rural areas. These are all pilot projects with the general objective of demonstrating the technical and economic feasibility of using fish to improve the nutritional, social and economic life of the poor majority. Typically, they involve technical assistance and training. They are located in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Jamaica and Panama. I believe presentations have been made on one or more of these at previous GCFI meetings. The projects in the Dominican Republic and Guatemala are being implemented, in part, using the Peace Corps and private and voluntary organizations and are examples of AID's joint implementation of projects with these types of organizations. AID has funded various small-scale fisheries activities through these organizations in the past, and probably will continue to do so.

In addition, numerous short term studies, technical assistance, training programs and other activities related to fishery development and production, and mariculture are being funded by the various AID Caribbean country offices in the region. These are mostly done through funding sources not identified as fisheries projects per se. A number of fisheries projects and activities in the region are also funded from AID offices in Washington.

The Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean is funding a research project aimed at developing a major new food and economic resource for the Caribbean Basin. The research is just getting under way and will investigate the mariculture of coral reef algal tufts to produce the food source for culture of invertebrates such as spider crabs and marine gastropods. The work is being done through a grant to the Smithsonian Marine Systems Laboratory and will initially concentrate on the Turks and Caicos, with the possibility of expansion to other areas later.

Through a program administered by AID's Office of the Science Advisor, two projects are currently being funded in the region. The first one, "An Assessment of Eastern Caribbean Salt Ponds and Mariculture Systems for Brine Shrimp," is being initiated through a grant to Island Resources Foundation. The second one is a research and development effort to determine the feasibility of using seagrasses to restore nursery areas that support offshore fisheries, entitled, "The Potential for

Utilizing Seagrasses to Restore Caribbean Benthic Nearshore Impacted Areas." This work, which is just getting started, is being done in Jamaica through a grant to Florida International University.

The Bureau for Private Enterprise is providing partial funding to a shrimp aquaculture pilot project in Antigua, through a loan to Antigua Shrimpery, Ltd.

The Bureau for Science and Technology is funding a small research project in Costa Rica aimed at reducing the post harvest food loss in fishery products through a grant to the University of Rhode Island. This Bureau is also funding two "Title XII," or Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSP), one in Aquaculture Pond Dynamics, the other in Marine Fish Stock Assessment. The Title XII program was described in considerable detail in Philip Roedel's paper, "Scientific Assistance in Caribbean Fisheries: An Overview" presented at the 31st Annual GCFI meetings in Cancun in 1978. The Pond Dynamics CRSP is in place and operational with research sites established in Honduras and Panama, with Jamaica to be added later as funds become available. The Stock Assessment CRSP is currently in the early planning stages. No country/site selections have yet been made.

Finally, the fisheries biologists in the Bureau for Science and Technology provide professional support in fisheries, either directly or through the technical staff of the National Marine Fisheries Service, supplemented by cooperative agreements with Auburn University (Aquaculture) and the University of Rhode Island (Capture fisheries) to AID's Regional Bureaus and country offices upon request. The range of services available includes feasibility studies, preliminary planning and project design, development of AID project proposal documentation, and short-term technical consultation to assist with project implementation and evaluation. Through the universities, long and short-term training (including in-country training) and information services are also provided.

Future Activities

AID is presently working with the Peace Corps to develop a cooperative effort of in-country training and extension programs in freshwater aquaculture, marine capture fisheries and freshwater capture fisheries for selected countries. The Agency is also participating in preliminary discussions with the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding possibilities for increased cooperative efforts in aquaculture.

The governments of several countries in the Region (Costa Rica, Jamaica, Panama), as well as Ecuador have made strong presentations to their respective AID country office for provision of technical and financial assistance to country initiatives to promote marine or freshwater shrimp farming. These requests are under consideration.

AID country offices in Honduras and Haiti have recently expressed interest in considering possible future activities in the marine fisheries sector, and have requested technical assistance from the Bureau for Science and Technology in

pursuing this.

AID is continuing to seek out and support opportunities to develop and promote promising technologies aimed at increasing food production, employment of the poor majority and income generation. The need for new fisheries projects is continually being explored and projects are proposed and developed in response to those needs. Topics that may receive attention as new fisheries projects are developed for the Caribbean and elsewhere include: (1) The problems of coastal communities that depend on artisanal fisheries for their livelihood; (2) The problem, of post harvest losses in fishery products; (3) Assisting developing countries in establishing effective management control over the living marine resources within their exclusive economic coastal zones, and (4) Environmental impact assessment and coastal resource management aspects of fishery resources and habitats especially in respect to artisanal fisheries.

AID is very much interested in exploring ways it might appropriately improve its efforts in providing assistance to the fisheries sector. I believe this meeting will be useful to AID in allowing it to gain a better understanding of the status, problems and perceived needs of artisanal fisheries in the Caribbean area from the experts in the Region. This should prove useful to AID's future planning efforts for the Caribbean. At the same time, I hope that my description of AID's fisheries projects and activities and possible future directions will be useful to the fisheries experts in the region, and to other donor agencies in gaining a better understanding of AID's interests in this area. Hopefully, this exchange will also provide a basis for discussions of future areas of cooperation and coordination among donors and host countries.