

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Organisation des
Nations Unies pour
l'alimentation et
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la
Agricultura

Title of Project: Caribbean Billfish Project (CBP) - Component of the GEF-funded, World Bank implemented, project P128437: Ocean Partnership for Sustainable Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation Models for Innovation and Reform (ABNJ) Project

Project symbol: GCP/SLC/001/WBK

Recipient Country: Regional Subproject for the Western Central Atlantic/Caribbean

Resource Partner: The World Bank

Government/other counterpart: Members of the FAO Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)

Executing Agency: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC/FAO)

Expected EOD (Starting Date): 1 August 2014

Expected NTE (End Date): 31 July 2017

Total Budget: USD 1 949 220

Contents

I.	Summary	3
II.	Country and Regional Context	3
III.	Sectoral and Institutional Context.....	5
IV.	Relevance to the Caribbean Region Policies and Strategies.....	6
V.	Objectives	7
VI.	Project Components and Results	7
VII.	Key Risks and Issues	14
VIII.	Implementing Agency Assessment.....	15

I. Summary

Billfish species including blue and white marlin, sailfish and spearfish, make significant contributions to Caribbean economies, livelihoods and food security through two very distinct fishery systems - *commercial* and *recreational*. On the one hand, the commercial fisheries are small-scale, multispecies operations supplying low value seafood markets and contributing significantly to local livelihoods, income and food security (the sector assures the livelihoods of an estimated 10 million people in the region). On the other hand, billfish are amongst the most prized ‘trophy’ species in the world as recreational game fish. Globally, billfish support a vast and highly capitalized tourism sector valued at some USD 70 billion per year. Billfish are also important incidental by-catch species from large scale tuna long-line fisheries operating both within and beyond national jurisdictions.

Declining trends due to overfishing have been recognized in most billfish species across the Atlantic. This represents a threat to both of these subsectors and to the overall sustainability of respective contributions to regional economies. Collective action by Caribbean nations to improve management and conservation billfish resources in the region and to influence decision-making at the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) level, offer significant opportunities to reverse this situation.

The objective of this Caribbean Billfish Project (CBP) is to develop business plans for one or more long-term pilot projects aimed at sustainable management and conservation of billfish within the Western Central Atlantic Ocean. The divergence in value between the commercial and recreational subsectors represents a significant ‘entry point’ and opportunity for conservation and value creation which this project aims to exploit. The completed business plans will incorporate the economic, technical and financial rationale and feasibility to attract investment involving private and public capital.

The project will also contribute significantly to regional capacity building, information sharing systems and management and conservation planning for billfish. The Executing Agency of this subproject is described as “WECAFC/FAO”. In this regard, it is noted that WECAFC was established in 1973 by Resolution 4/61 of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Council under Article VI (1) of the FAO Constitution and that although FAO is the Executing Agency, WECAFC based at FAO’s offices in Bridgetown, Barbados, will undertake all of the work described below. Henceforth, we refer to “WECAFC/FAO” as the Executing Agency of this regional subproject.

II. Country and Regional Context

Billfish are a group of species which are members of the family *Istiophoridae*, which also includes blue and white marlin, sailfish and spearfish. Billfish resources in the Atlantic are managed under the authority of ICCAT. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has listed several of the species as vulnerable and the ICCAT has listed blue and white marlin as overfished, while sailfish appear to be overfished but a lack of adequate catch data from artisanal harvesters makes assessment difficult. No assessment has been attempted for the spearfish species. In 2013, ICCAT recommendation 12-04 “to further strengthen the plan to rebuild blue marlin and white marlin stocks” came into effect, setting hard national landing quotas and prohibiting the entrance of recreationally caught billfish into commercial markets for all nations fishing Atlantic billfish within and beyond national

jurisdictions. The ICCAT members shall inform the Commission annually of steps taken to implement this Recommendation through domestic law or regulations, including monitoring, control and surveillance measures. However, several of the nations in the Western Central Atlantic are not ICCAT members, indicating that there are still challenges with respect to regional engagement in multilateral management including the capacity of several of the nations to create and enforce management systems as well as to engage with ICCAT.

Billfish species have very different values depending on their use. Recognizing the declining trend in the stock and the socio-economic value of the billfish species for income generation and food security, improved management has a substantial potential to make a difference with respect to better ecosystem balance and improved livelihoods. The current level of harvesting of billfish in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) of the Atlantic Ocean is undermining the management and conservation efforts made by the Caribbean States for these species. The conviction that collective action is urgently needed on the part of Caribbean States to manage and conserve billfish resources in the area under their mandate and to influence decision-making at the ICCAT level has become a matter of broad consensus. While billfish as recreational gamefish are among the most prized in the world, at the same time they are amongst the cheapest fish in local markets in many of the countries in the Western Central Atlantic and Caribbean. This divergence creates a substantial potential to both provide better stock conservation and to create economic value if appropriate institutional structures are established that allow the proceeds of high-value uses to be shared by fishers and communities that are consuming billfish as a low price alternative.

Although labeled Caribbean for convenience, this subproject will be set within the Western Central Atlantic Ocean. This ranges from Brazil in the south to the United States of America in the north, and includes coastal waters, territorial seas, Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of numerous Caribbean Small-Island Developing States (SIDS), overseas territories and Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ – 51 percent of the area is considered ABNJ and 86 percent as deep seas). See Fig 1 for a map of the area to be covered by the project.

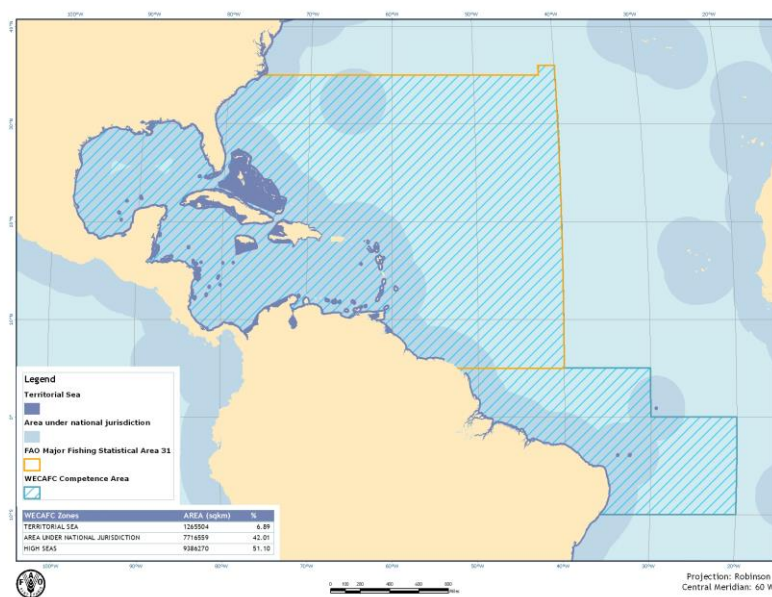


Figure 1: The WECAFC/FAO mandate area, including the major fishing areas Western Central Atlantic (FAO Area 31) and the northern part of the Southwest Atlantic (FAO Area 41)

III. Sectoral and Institutional Context

The fisheries sector in the Western Central Atlantic is a very important driver of the regional economy. It provides employment to an estimated 900 000 people in the primary sector (capture fisheries) and around 3 million jobs in ancillary activities (such as processing, marketing, services provision to the fleets). The sector assures the livelihoods of an estimated 10 million people in the region. The total value of fish and fisheries products exports from the Caribbean nations added up to USD 2.2 billion annually in recent years (excluding exports by the United States of America and Brazil). Fish and fisheries products are important for regional food security in the Caribbean with consumption levels ranging from a mere 8-10 kg per capita per year in some islands to over 23 kg in other countries in the region (the current world average is 18 kg per capita per year).

Billfish serve two important yet disparate markets in the Caribbean region: *commercial* and *recreational* fisheries. Both subsectors are important providers of employment and income in the region. The commercial fisheries can be characterized as small-scale, multispecies fishing operations. These supply low value seafood markets in the Caribbean and contribute significantly to livelihoods, income and food security amongst local populations.

By contrast, billfish are amongst the most prized ‘trophy’ game fish species in the world for the recreational subsector. Globally billfish support a large, growing and highly capitalized tourism subsector valued at some USD 70 billion per year, a conservative estimate given this excludes the indirect impacts (World Bank, Hidden Harvests, 2012).

The divergence in value between these subsectors represents a significant opportunity for conservation and value creation which this project aims to exploit. In particular, given that most recreational fishing involves ‘catch and release’, the potential for socio-economic development associated with conservation is increasingly recognized.

The precise overall impact of recreational fisheries on the economies of the Caribbean islands has not been estimated – a gap in existing information which this project will aim to address. However, with tens of thousands of recreational fishing vessels in operation, recreational activity clearly constitutes an economically important sector. Specific data from a 2009 study in Costa Rica, estimated that over USD 760 000 anglers travel to the Caribbean to sportfish every year. In Costa Rica, it is estimated that visiting anglers spent USD 467 million with USD 329 million for travel, USD 119 million for lodging, USD 15.6 million for restaurants, USD 88 million for fishing services and USD 6 million for local transportation. These expenditures generated over 30 000 jobs in Costa Rica alone. A 2007 study of the Los Cabos region in Mexico estimated that over 350 000 anglers fished in the waters of the Los Cabos. On average, every visiting angler spent USD 1 785 on lodging, charter boats, food and other expenses. Their expenditures generated USD 1.25 billion in total economic activity, USD 636.6 million in retail activity, supported 24 426 jobs in Mexico, and generated USD 245.5 million in local and federal tax revenue. From these limited studies it is clear that fishing for billfish is an economically important activity in the region.

Billfish are generally not targeted by the Distant Water Fishing Nation (DWFN) long-lining fleets that consider billfish as by-catch only.

The key regional bodies addressing stewardship of billfish in the Western Central Atlantic region are:

- the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC/FAO), which has 34 members in the region;^{1,2}
- ICCAT with 15 member states in the Western Central Atlantic Region (out of a total of 48 members).³

There are also several other Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFB) with specific purposes in the region, which collaborate in various formats including joint Working Groups.

This project has been developed by several institutions, which are members of the Working Group on Recreational Fisheries originally founded by WECAFC/FAO, Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Central America (OSPESCA), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC). The establishment of this group in 2012 reflects the extremely high value uses of billfish related to recreational fishing and the increased recognition of this value in the region. Other key collaborators in this Group include private organizations, particularly the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) and the Billfish Foundation (TBF); ICCAT, the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the International Council on the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the University of the West Indies (UWI/CERMES), and the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO). The participation of IGFA in this project is of particular importance as this organization represents the relatively high value users of billfish.

IV. Relevance to the Caribbean Region Policies and Strategies

This project addresses priority Area C “Reducing Vulnerability to Natural Disasters and Strengthening Environmental Management” of the Regional Partnership Strategy for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) for the period 2010-2014. In particular it contributes to reducing the major threats to the marine ecosystems in the OECS countries; threats that include overexploitation of the resource base, loss of natural habitats, changes in water quality and quantity, and climate change. The Regional Partnership strategy asserts that “If current trends continue, an estimated USD 350 to 870 million will be lost annually between 2015 and 2050 through declining fish catches, reduced tourism, and loss of shoreline protection associated with coral reef degradation.” If the wider Caribbean region as a whole is considered the loss of economic value will be at least four or five times as high.

The importance of large pelagic fisheries, including billfish, for the region is recognized by the countries that participated in recent years in the GEF (International Waters) funded Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) project. The Strategic Action Programme (SAP) of the CLME, which was endorsed by more than 25 governments in 2013, incorporated a strategy (5B) “Enhance the governance arrangements for implementing an ecosystem approach for large pelagics fisheries”. The GEF funded CLME+ project will contribute to SAP implementation over the coming years. In view of the wide scope of the SAP, it is foreseen that

¹ Further information about WECAFC/FAO can be found at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/wecafc/en>.

² The members of WECAFC/FAO are the following: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, European Union, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent/Grenadines, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Boliv Rep of Venezuela.

³ Further information about ICCAT can be found at <http://www.iccat.org/en/>

this regional CBP subproject will make a significant contribution to the joint efforts under SAP Strategy 5B and to SAP Actions foreseen, including:

- 5B.1 (A) Establish key agreements and operationalize arrangements among organizations with a stake in large pelagics fisheries in order to implement EAF;
- 5B.2 (B) Strengthen the capacity of the (sub)regional organizations and enhance the full implementation of the large pelagics fisheries policy cycle;
- 5B.3 (A) Strengthen the Region's position in the ICCAT decision-making process through;
- enhanced intra-regional coordination and cooperation;
- 5B.4 (A) Operationalize and strengthen an integrated, subregional decision support system (DSS) for the large pelagic fisheries (in coordination with the flying fish arrangements).

The CBP is also expected to contribute to and inform discussions by members of WECAFC/FAO on the potential transition of WECAFC/FAO from a regional fishery advisory body into a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO). This process would not only strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) in the region, but would also cover a major gap in RFMO coverage in the Atlantic Ocean.

Climate Change and variability adaptation is critical for Caribbean SIDS in almost all sectors. A partnership of FAO, CRFM, WECAFC/FAO, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) developed and agreed a "Strategy and Action Plan for disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in fisheries and aquaculture in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region" in 2013. The Strategy receives support from GEF's Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) project on "Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector". The CBP will engage with this activity and in particular, support its efforts to strengthen fisheries management and mainstream climate change adaptation into management practices.

V. Objectives

The overall rationale and objective of the CBP is to develop business plans for one or more long-term pilot projects aimed at sustainable management and conservation of billfish within the Western Central Atlantic Ocean. Business plan development will be informed by validation trials in at least two Caribbean States (countries or overseas territories). These will test innovative management arrangements and technologies. The divergence in value between the commercial and recreational subsectors represents a convenient 'entry point' and significant opportunity for conservation and value creation which this project aims to exploit. The completed business plans will incorporate the economic, technical and financial rationale and feasibility to attract investment involving private and public capital.

The project will also contribute to regional capacity building, information systems and management and conservation planning for billfish.

VI. Project Components and Results

There are four project components. Each is supported by a set of activities agreed amongst regional stakeholders and described in detail below.

1. *Generating value and conservation outcomes through innovative management.*
2. *Strengthening regional billfish management and conservation planning.*
3. *A Functional and Responsive Consortium on Billfish Management and Conservation (CBMC).*
4. *Business plans developed for pilot investments in sustainable management and conservation of billfish.*

Component 1. Generating value and conservation outcomes through innovative management.

- **Result 1.1** Enhanced knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic and ecological value of Billfish resources in the Western Central Atlantic and a clear value proposition for reform of current billfish governance structures. Results will inform pilot selection.

From several perspectives, billfish are good candidates to address the relationship between commercial and recreational fishers using rights-based management instruments. The billfish is among the lowest priced species in local fish markets in the Caribbean, indicating a relatively low contribution to profitability for artisanal fishers. By contrast it is among the most sought-after species by recreational anglers, giving them a high value in this primarily non-consumptive use. A key challenge to motivate investment in enhanced management is to document current values through economic analyses, and to consider potential institutional arrangements that could be brought into play to provide a strong economic incentive for local fishers to abstain from landing billfish. Such a scenario, in which billfish mortality is effectively reduced, would send strong signals to recreational fishers, operators and associated industries that this could enhance long-term returns to their business.

While it might generally be easy to understand that billfish has a much higher value in recreational fisheries than as food in local markets, there are no clear data available that indicate the magnitude of the values that can be captured by communities in the Caribbean States. A crucial activity under Result 1.1 will be obtaining realistic socio-economic and market information covering both commercial and recreational fishing for billfish. This will be a particularly important starting point for the countries or regions which are being considered for pilot cases (see Result 1.3). This information will be used to analyse potential allocation scenarios, supporting institutions and likely benefits that could accrue as a result of reforms in these pilot locations.

Socio-economic information will also be used to generate awareness amongst regional and national level tourism authorities such as Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) on the value of these industries per se, as well as the potential to generate far greater value from billfish through improved management arrangements. Results will also feed into the billfish management planning process at ICCAT's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS).

- **Result 1.2.** Billfish management options and opportunities explored to enable potential pilot site selection, including reviews of regulatory and institutional arrangements in potential pilot locations.

Regulatory and institutional reform in fisheries management has increasingly centered on arrangements that are based on a clearer definition of access and use rights and varying degrees of devolution of management responsibility to the rights holders. Assigning exclusive rights to individual fishers or communities aims to eliminate *de facto* open access problems, terminate the ‘race to fish’ and lead eventually to improved efficiency, productivity and operational profitability. Such ‘rights-based approaches’ can also be used to address allocation between different fleets and stakeholder groups, including between recreational and commercial sectors. Economic value can be created through voluntary rights reallocation to more valuable uses for compensation, including abstaining from utilizing the right. This process, which will be a crucial aspect of this project, permits the value to be shared among the initial rights holders (normally community groups if reduced landings and value generation are to be achieved) and the new users – the recreational sector.

Activities under Result 1.2 will explore management options that capitalize on the significant potential to create value using approaches governing the relationship between recreational and commercial fishers. Such options will need to take account not only of the lack of awareness of the range of management options available (including different forms of rights-based depending on context), as well as the weak institutional and management capacity in many Caribbean countries. The CBP will assess capacity together with the existing institutional, legal and policy context in a number of potential locations. The findings will be taken into account when making a final selection for pilot trials. In order to succeed, there will be an institutional infrastructure in place (covering both public sector administration and small-scale fishers’ and recreational fishers’ organizations) that enables change, and there will be both commercial and recreational fishing industries that are at least partly targeting billfish. Cultural and political acceptance and commitment to better management, encouraging the efforts of the project, will be crucial factors pilot selection.

While rights-based systems have been proposed in other settings to allocate fishing rights between artisanal, commercial and recreational sectors, none have been tried in practice. Achieving excludability will be a key challenge calling for cooperation between states and stakeholders. Although exclusive rights are possible within EEZ, solution options will take account of the unique challenge associated with shared highly migratory stocks management, a broader aspect that will also be addressed under the main project’s Global Think Tank. Guidance will be sought through the think tank, and lessons learned from experiences outside of the region where, for example, coastal states have effectively engaged in collective action on highly migratory species. The Western Central Pacific is one such region where SIDS have collectively (under Parties to the Nauru Agreement) developed an input control system based on vessel day permits which constrain overall tuna purse seine catch effort and prohibit fishing in ABNJ. Institutional design will need to be adapted to the specific circumstances in each case, with stakeholder involvement by the local fisheries communities, local fishers’ organizations, game fishing associations, tourism authorities, and others.

Result 1.2 activities will enable a final selection of trial sites. An initial selection of potential pilot locations included Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil (one region), Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, the Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, overseas territories of France such as Martinique, the Netherlands such as Bonaire, Saint Eustatius and Saba, the United Kingdom such as Bermuda, as well as islands of the United States of America such as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have expressed interest in participating in these pilots and project activities in general.

- **Result 1.3.** Pilot trials established in at least two Caribbean States (countries or overseas territories) to test and validate innovative management and supporting arrangements. Lessons learned will inform regional approaches in developing and adopting the billfish management and conservation plan for the Western Central Atlantic (Key Result 2).

Based on the findings of Result 1.2, activities under Result 1.3 will be initiated, supported, and coordinated by IGFA in close coordination with the national fisheries authorities of the participating countries, communities and Consortium members. Pilot trials will be necessary to validate institutional options on rights allocation, and for technical validation of a variety of innovations including tagging systems, new fishing gear such as circle hooks, and new monitoring equipment such as cameras/mobile GPS devices for commercial fishers to document catch-release. Results from the trials will directly inform Component 4 business plans for large scale pilots. As such the trials will support validation of the earlier research findings (Result 1.2) in practice and enable final selection of management and development measures for the large-scale pilot investment projects. Assuming a reasonable level of success, small-scale pilot trials are likely to merge seamlessly into the larger pilot investment projects once finance has been identified.

The pilot trials for ‘proof of concept’ are a new concept to the region and the fisheries sector in the Caribbean. As such it is essential to communicate clearly and properly document benefits, failures and lessons learned.

Conservation International has expressed strong interest in supporting the pilot developments and trials and will participate and separately fund technical assistance.

Component 2. Strengthening regional billfish management and conservation planning.

- **Result 2.1** A regionally-agreed billfish management and conservation plan for the Western Central Atlantic, spanning areas within and beyond national jurisdiction of the Western Central Atlantic.

The work towards achieving this key result will be coordinated by the WECAFC/FAO Secretariat, making use of the partnership approaches and communication structures established within the *Consortium on Billfish management and Conservation in the Western Central Atlantic*, (Result 3).

A regional Billfish management and conservation plan for the Western Central Atlantic is currently under preparation by key project stakeholders and promises good regional ownership with positive indications of commitment on compliance. The project will build upon and support this regional effort. It will also be increasingly informed by drawing on information emerging from Component 1.

The plan seeks to enable regional management arrangements that will benefit the stocks, their long-term sustainability, and the economic and food security contributions of the fishery. The plan will assist in creating a context in which harvest levels can be monitored based on stronger scientific research and catch information. The plan will also facilitate enhanced involvement and cooperation of Caribbean States in exchanging views and knowledge on science and management. The plan will foster management and conservation alternatives that protect

spawning potential, reduce by-catch and by-catch mortality, increase regional control measures and help optimize socio-economic returns.

A comprehensive, inclusive and participatory process will be followed over an 18 month period. This process will begin with an extensive analysis on the use of rights based management in transboundary and highly migratory fisheries of pelagic species⁴, on recreational/commercial artisanal programmes, as well as a baseline study on billfish resources and billfish fisheries in the region. Cooperation with other ABNJ regional projects will be sought through the *Global Think Tank*. ICCAT SCRS information will form the basis for the study.

As noted above, innovative management arrangements are to be explored by the project, including the interplay between commercial and recreational fisheries. While current ICCAT landing limits are a useful starting point, they are insufficient to manage and conserve the billfish stocks. The regional plan is seen as essential in facilitating buy-in from ICCAT non-contracting parties and ensuring long-term responsible fishing of these resources.

The final draft plan will be presented to the various RFBs for regional level endorsement at the 2016 session of WECAFC/FAO. At a later stage, through ICCAT and other RFBs active in the wider Atlantic Ocean, the scope and coverage area of the plan may be extended. This will however require further awareness raising and commitment, aspects that are not directly covered by CBP.

- **Result 2.2.** Increased capacity within participating Caribbean States to engage in determining improved shared high migratory fish stocks management focused on billfish in the Western Central Atlantic, including contributions toward a more coherent ‘Caribbean engagement’ on these stocks at international fora including ICCAT.

It is generally recognized that many coastal developing states and SIDS lack the capacity to effectively participate in international fora on fisheries and ocean governance including United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea UNCLOS processes. The majority of the Caribbean States fall into this category. Engaging all Caribbean nations to ensure they have an effective voice in new management arrangements discussed and/or promoted at international level is expected to be of considerable regional value and will be facilitated through this project. A particular challenge is the management of shared highly migratory fish stocks such as tuna and billfish. Caribbean nations’ access to and benefits from these stocks needs to be balanced against the interests of Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFN) who currently take a large part of the catch.

Activities under this Result will comprise awareness raising and capacity building amongst Caribbean nations’ fisheries administrations and stakeholders. This will focus on aspects that are of direct relevance to billfish management arrangements under consideration by CBP. Project engagement in the *Global Think Tank* will be particularly strategic. This will enhance stakeholder awareness of management arrangements used in other regions such as the Western Pacific, and enable wider consultation on their application or adaptation for use in the Western Central Atlantic region.

⁴ This will draw on work to be led by the Forum Fisheries Agency on a Theory of Shared High Migratory Stocks Management, which will be disseminated and discussed under the *Global Think Tank*.

Capacity building through Caribbean stakeholders' engagement in the management planning processes (Result 2.1) should enable more effective participation in consultative processes related to UNCLOS, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), ICCAT, etc. Where possible, use will be made of existing groupings, such as the CRFM Working Group on ICCAT matters, to ensure proper information dissemination, communication and a joint approach/voice of the Caribbean nations in the various international fora.

WECAFC/FAO will work closely with Caribbean States and RFBs to ensure coherent and coordinated approaches. The project will promote and build capacity to implement best practice in the Caribbean States where necessary, consistent with various relevant international fisheries instruments such as FAO Compliance Agreement, UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and the 2009 Port State Measures Agreement.

Component 3. A Functional and Responsive Consortium on Billfish Management and Conservation (CBMC)

- **Result 3.1.** A Consortium on Billfish Management and Conservation (CBMC) in the Western Central Atlantic established, comprising relevant organizations (RFB/RFMOs, International Non-Governmental Organizations [INGOs], Country Strategy Outline [CSOs] and private sector representatives) together with an agreed work plan and budget that responds to project needs.

The CBMC will be created to oversee the development and outreach for management planning (above) and other project components. During the course of the project the CBMC will have an important operational role in providing advice on technical and scientific bases for decisions and recommendations on measures concerning general conservation and management of billfish resources, including the biological, social and economic aspects of billfish fisheries.

The Consortium will be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and agreed terms of reference. As such it is expected to become a true partnership; a further development of the Working Group on Recreational Fisheries. The founding partners of the Consortium will be IGFA, WECAFC/FAO, CRFM, OSPESCA, CFMC, CNFO and ICCAT. Other partners will be approached, keeping in mind the advantages of a public-private sector balance in which CBOs and NGOs also have prominent roles.

This key Result will be undertaken and managed by IGFA under single source contract to WECAFC/FAO. IGFA will initiate the consortium establishment and provide the secretariat for the Consortium.

- **Result 3.2.** A regional Billfish management information system established by the CBMC and hosted at the WECAFC/FAO Secretariat

In recognition of the significant global gaps in billfish catch and landing information and the consequent difficulties in managing this resource, the project will aim to establish a regional Fisheries Management Information System (FMIS) for billfishes. Being generally a by-catch species in catches of commercial (long-line) fleets in the Western central Atlantic, the data and statistics on the species are often poor. The information gathered under the project will be collected, and analysed and made available to the CBMC and partners and interested stakeholders and through linkages with international groups, such as the i-Marine community.

The FMIS aims to facilitate the availability of the necessary information for informed decision-making and management planning for billfish management and conservation in the Western Central Atlantic. It will strengthen the information base of the Caribbean States, and also help these countries to better report data to ICCAT. The FMIS is expected to include basic fisheries catch and effort data together with biological, stocks inventories, and key socio-economic and market information obtained under Result 1.1.

New Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools for fisheries information will be used and FMIS will be accessible by all stakeholders in the sector. Cost-effective solutions will be identified in partnership with others, as the project itself has allocated limited funding for this FMIS. The system will explore the synergies available of integrating with FAO's Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)⁵. Opportunities also exist to integrate data gathered and analysed by Conservation International, World Water Forum (WWF) and other project partners.

The FMIS system (including possible integration with FIRMS) will permit review and analysis of data via the Web, use of mapping and Geographic Information System (GIS) tools and enable links with other systems such as FAO FishStatJ, ICES databases, CRFM regional fisheries database, IGFA tagging databases, ICCAT databases, ICCAT's billfish research programme under SCRS, and so on. To inform the FMIS, activities may include the design and testing of new annual statistical information collection systems for recreational fisheries. This is in-line with the mandate of Working Group on Recreational Fisheries.

WECAFC/FAO will provide the necessary ICT infrastructure to host the FMIS in its Subregional Office for the Caribbean (Barbados) and ensure long-term feasibility and sustainability of the system through integration with FIRMS. Eventually however, the maintenance and management of this system may be handled by the FIRMS secretariat or one of the other partners. Management and operational costs involved in maintaining the database after project termination will need to be addressed in its design stage already, ensuring sustainability at low costs.

Component 4. Business plans developed for pilot investments in sustainable management and conservation of billfish

- **Result 4.1** Business plans for pilot investment projects on sustainable management and conservation of billfish in up to two locations in the Caribbean.

From the start of the project under Component 1 (Results 1.2 and 1.3) and following the establishment of the CBMC, efforts will be made to identify and prioritize suitable locations to initiate the key project inputs into business planning for long-term large-scale pilot investment projects.

⁵ FIRMS has entered recently into a partnership with WECAFC/FAO, and has information sharing agreements with many RFMOs (including e.g. IATTC, ICCAT, CCAMLR, GFCM), which guarantees long-term sustainability and access to information. The FIRMS partnership will also play an active role in the Caribbean LME+ project implementation, in particular regarding subregional decision support systems for key fisheries including large pelagics.

In pursuit of these pilot investment projects and by means of the necessary validation trials, the Consortium will explore public private partnership arrangements to evaluate options, develop proposed approaches and develop business plans for investment pilots at a large-scale.

The results and lessons learned from the other Components will come together to ensure a feasible business case. Leadership from CBMC will ensure that effective public-private partnership opportunities are fully explored.

This Component is expected to deliver at least one economically feasible business case with a value proposition that attracts external financial assistance before termination of the project. It is foreseen that the business case will clearly demonstrate positive environmental consequences (such as reduction in by-catch, increased health of the stocks and increased distribution of spawning areas) of billfish management and conservation, internalized within the economic choices of competent individuals, firms and fishing communities in the Caribbean States. Continuing linkages with the World Bank Group and the early engagement of interested and appropriate investment/financing institutions will ensure that investment/business cases will meet the criteria of these institutions.

Financial institutions will be part and actively involved in the project from the start to ensure buy-in and commitments to the results that emerge during implementation and particularly in the design of the investment proposal. Activities foreseen in support of this fourth Key Result include the organization of a regional conference to generate public and private sector buy-in and commitment to the investment proposal, ensuring proper stakeholder involvement and linkages with other ongoing initiatives, preparation of the proposal in the format that is required by the investors, formal presentation of the investment proposal and to shepherd the proposal through approval processes in the financial institutions and of the governments involved.

VII. Key Risks and Issues

The main risks are summarized below and mitigation measure proposed. The overall implementation risk is **low/medium** in view of the mitigation measures identified and available. The detailed and inclusive consultations with all key stakeholders during preparation and the fact that the objectives of the project fit well with and support the increased effort with respect to stock protection and management by ICCAT are both key factors serving to reduce risk.

- **Limited regional institutional capacity.** This will be addressed through the focus on capacity development and institutional strengthening with support from regional fishery bodies. Opportunities for pilot business plan development will build on existing institutions and structures wherever possible.
- **Limited political commitment to reform.** This will be addressed through identifying strong political leadership and mandate, ensuring a strong stakeholder base (including industry, communities and NGOs) underpins planning; and good communication/social messaging on policy setting.
- **Regional policy incoherence.** This will be addressed through regional management planning processes and through new structures including the CBMC.

Stakeholders. An initial stakeholder analysis was carried out in the participatory formulation process of this project. It revealed that the following key stakeholders are to be involved in the project.

- Regional Fishery Bodies: WECAFC/FAO, ICCAT, CRFM, OSPESCA, CFMC;
- International Organizations: FAO, GEF, ICES;
- Recreational Fisheries INGOs: IGFA and TBF;
- Environmental NGOs: Conservation International, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy(TNC), Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI);
- National fisheries authorities in participating countries;
- Small-scale fisheries representatives: CNFO and national cooperative societies in pilot countries;
- Recreational Fisheries associations in participating countries;
- Regional and international financial institutions: World Bank, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Inter-American Development Bank (IADB);
- Regional fisheries research institutions: GCFI and CERMES of UWI;
- Regional economic cooperation institutions: OECS, CARICOM, Central American Integration System (SICA);
- Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFNs): fisheries authorities from WECAFC/FAO members Japan, Spain, Korea, etc. and other DWFNs;
- Projects: such as Too Big To Ignore (TBTI), MAGDALESA (European Union funded) and CLME (GEF funded), and other ABNJ projects.

The Project Management Unit (PMU) and CBMC will make every effort to include the above stakeholders in project implementation. Most have been involved in the formulation process and others have been made aware though the regional fishery bodies involved. At the start of the project a detailed stakeholder analysis will be prepared by the PMU for review and discussion by the Project Steering Committee (PSC).

VIII. Implementing Agency Assessment

A. Introduction

The proposed project area for this ABNJ project component is the WECAFC/FAO mandate area, including the Western Central Atlantic (FAO AREA 31) and northern part of the Southwest Atlantic (FAO Area 41). The project area fully incorporates the areas covered by the GEF funded CLME+ project “Catalyzing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems”.

WECAFC/FAO, established in 1973, has the objective to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources of the area of competence of the Commission (Area 31 and the northern part of Area 41). The WECAFC/FAO, as executing agency, will provide for the Project Management Unit (PMU). The PMU will be hosted by the secretariat of the WECAFC at the FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean (SLC), located in Barbados.

All 34 members of WECAFC/FAO will participate in the project to various degrees. Their participation will be in region level activities, as well as national activities in those countries that will be selected for piloting certain rights-based management measures. The regional

fisheries bodies active in the region (CRFM, OSPESCA, CMFC, ICCAT), the private sector, International NGOs (e.g. IGFA, Conservation International) and Civil society organizations (e.g. CNFO) will participate as well in this project, and clear linkages and collaboration will be established with the CLME+ project and the GEF Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) project on “Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector” as well as other relevant projects in the region.

Regular contacts and interactions will be maintained with additional entities such as Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFN) that are not member of WECAFC/FAO but are fishing in its mandate area, as well as with the Caribbean Tourism Organization.

Effective monitoring and reporting arrangements will be used, using FAO-World Bank agreed methodologies and timeframes. Use will be made from standard (agreed) formats, and include project cycle management, logical framework approaches, stakeholder assessments and result based monitoring.

B. Management arrangements

The project management structure is presented in Figure 2. The organizational arrangements include a cost effective PMU, a PSC, and the CBMC. Project management arrangements will enable close and effective working relationships with all key stakeholders. The PMU will provide for administration and coordination, project management leadership and have overall technical and administrative responsibility for the project. The PSC will be responsible for providing general oversight of the project implementation and will ensure that all agreed activities upon under the project are adequately prepared and carried out. The CBMC will provide technical and scientific advice and services to the project and in its day-to-day work, ensure partnerships, sharing of information and take care of project visibility.

The project management structure is divided in a governance, executive and operational part, represented respectively by the PSC, PMU + IGFA, and the CBMC.

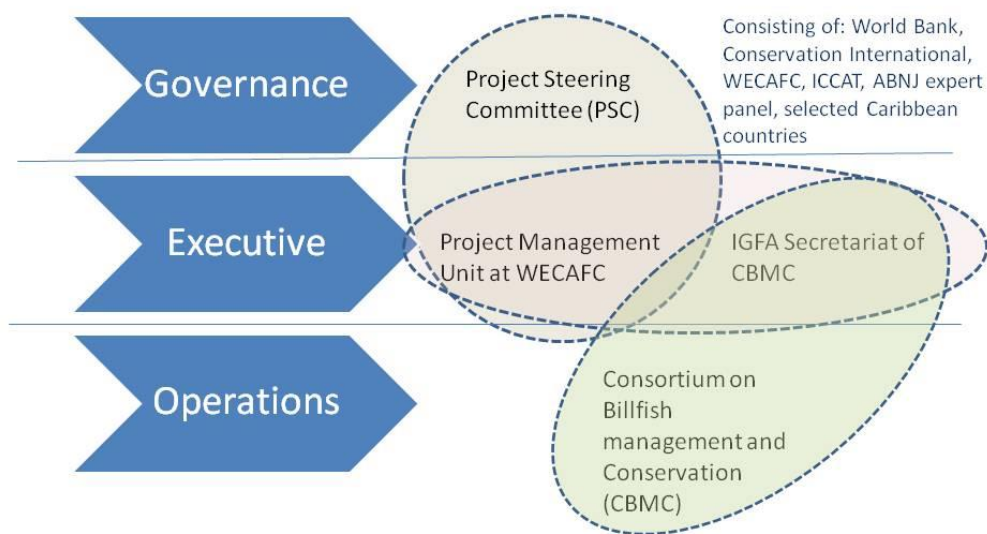


Figure 2: Project management arrangements

Project Management Unit (PMU) - Institutional Home

WECAFC/FAO, as executing agency, will provide the PMU to include a Subregional Fishery Officer at zero cost to the project to provide overall project coordination as Project Manager. He will provide the Secretariat function for the PSC and be assisted in the PMU by any necessary administrative support. Support may occasionally be sought from relevant technical units within the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FI), Rome headquarters. **The Project Manager will have overall responsibility for managing and overseeing the technical quality of the project work conducted by all partners under the project.**

Formally recognized executing partners of WECAFC/FAO in this project will be IGFA, CRFM, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States of America and OSPESCA. Their roles as executing partners will be laid down in an MoU between the partners at the start of the project.

In summary, the PMU at WECAFC/FAO will have the following Terms of References (ToR):

- provide project (office) administration and coordination with the World Bank, ensuring timely submission of project progress and financial reports;
- provide project management leadership and have overall technical and administrative responsibility for the project.

The PMU will facilitate and ensure the sharing and flow of information and linkages with other ABNJ projects, within the Caribbean region, internationally, among and between regions. FAO will provide technical support to the project in a very broad sense, tapping into the expertise from its programmes on fisheries resources, fisheries management, fisheries information management, sustainable development, enterprise development, legal advice, etc.

The FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean (SLC), which also hosts the WECAFC/FAO Secretariat and is located in Barbados, will be responsible for, *inter alia*, the overall financial management of the project funding provided by GEF through the World Bank to WECAFC/FAO, ensuring the necessary human resources and equipment inputs are provided in a timely manner to ensure smooth implementation of the project and delivery of project results, the submission of project progress and financial reports to World Bank/GEF.

In close consultation with the World Bank/GEF WECAFC/FAO will contract partners (NGOs, IGOs, Private sector) from the region, with the highest qualifications and technical competencies in-house available to carry out several of the project activities. It is foreseen that the expertise available within the executing partners IGFA, CRFM, CFMC, NOAA and OSPESCA and other relevant partners will be used extensively. In particular IGFA will play the lead coordinating role within the proposed consortium (CBMC) below.

The issuance by WECAFC/FAO of any contract, and purchase of materials or equipment that are necessary to provide the necessary Technical Assistance, using funds provided by the GEF/World Bank under this project, will be done according to FAO's established procurement rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Project Steering Committee

The Project will be governed by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) which will be responsible for providing general oversight of the Project implementation and will ensure that all agreed activities upon under the Project are adequately prepared and carried out.

In particular, the PSC will have the following ToRs:

- provide overall strategic guidance to the PMU in the execution of the project;
- ensure all project outputs are delivered in accordance with the Project Document;
- review, recommend amendments if appropriate, and endorse the draft Annual Regional Work Plan of the project;
- facilitate the “mainstreaming” of relevant project findings and recommendations into national policy.

The PSC will be comprised of one representative from each of the following institutions and executing partners: World Bank, WECAFC/FAO, ICCAT, Conservation International and selected Caribbean countries. The latter will be selected in close coordination with CRFM and OSPESCA Secretariats. ABNJ expert panel members will join as required. Other collaborating countries and institutions will be invited as appropriate for PSC meetings. **PSC operations will be kept as cost effective as possible.** Annually meetings will be held wherever possible by ‘piggy backing’ on other regional meeting. In some circumstances, virtual meetings of the PSC may be called. The PSC will also maintain oversight of the implementation of the pilot projects. A regional Chair of the PSC will be selected at the first meeting. The Project Manager will provide the PSC secretariat functions, such as preparing documents for review and the PSC meeting minutes/reports.

Consortium on Billfish Management and Conservation (CBMC)

From the start of the project, IGFA will initiate and lead the consortium's establishment, providing the secretariat for the Consortium. The founding partners of the Consortium will be: IGFA, WECAFC/FAO, CRFM, OSPESCA, CFMC, CNFO and ICCAT. Other partners may be approached, keeping in mind that a public-private sector balance in which CBOs and NGOs have prominent role to play is required for the consortium to deliver at all levels.

CBMC representatives together with WECAFC/FAO would become natural partners under the main project's *Global Think Tank*.

Upon its establishment, the CBMC will function as a technical advisory body to the project. The CBMC, led by the TBF and in close coordination with the PMU, will be cost-effective tool to support the implementation of the Key Results under this project, as well as other programme activities the consortium decides to take on-board.

The IGFA, will carry out its secretariat functions of the CBMC under contract from WECAFC/FAO. The CBMC will develop a general work programme. The CBMC members will agree to work as a consortium with the work programme as the binding force. It will, amongst others promote better management and build awareness on the advantages of rights-based management of billfish, ensure visibility of the project, ensure sharing of information between the CBMC members/partners and dissemination of information generated by the project.

Although the scope of the CBMC will be wider than the project, and is expected to sustain after termination of the project. The Terms of Reference for the CBMC are the following. The CBMC will provide for the duration of the project the following services:

- provision of technical and scientific advice and services to the project and in its day-to-day work;
- assist the PMU in the development of the annual work programme of the project;
- ensure effective consultation, dissemination of information and uptake of project findings by the CBMC members and other relevant stakeholders;
- technically review the specific management recommendations and other advice from the project to the various participating regional fisheries bodies (WECAFC/FAO, CRFM, OSPESCA, ICCAT);
- provide and share information on billfish fisheries and conservation and other data relevant to the functions of the project between the partners and strengthen ties between partners;
- contribute to and participate in the overall project's *Global Think Tank*;
- increase visibility of the project and its activities and outcomes, the CBMC itself, and promote the implementation/uptake of project produced advice and recommendations.

Meetings of the Consortium will be convened on an as needed base. In summary, the role of the Consortium to technically review the management recommendations and advice from the project for the various participating regional fisheries bodies (WECAFC/FAO, CRFM, OSPESCA, ICCAT) will have to show its value. IGFA, as Consortium Secretariat, will ensure advocacy, promotion and increase visibility of the project and its activities and outcomes, the CBMC itself, and promote the implementation/uptake of project produced advice and recommendations.

The project management arrangements, presented above (also in Figure 2) enable the project to work in partnership with all key stakeholders. The distribution of governance, executing and operational responsibilities guarantees a high quality of the results foreseen. The pilot cases will benefit highly from such a structure, which already appears to be fruitful, as the project partners have managed to produce and agree on criteria for the selection of the pilots in the workshop held in March 2013 in Fort Lauderdale. The same management arrangements will ensure that Key Result 4 “A business plan/case developed for investment in long-term, sustainable management and conservation of the Billfish resources in the Western Central Atlantic” will be accepted by all major stakeholders involved, securing buy-in and viability of the pilots developed.

C. Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The PSC will have an important formal oversight and monitoring role in the project. Prior to PSCs, Project Performance Evaluation Report (PPER) will be prepared and circulated at least one month beforehand. The PPER will conform to other broader Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) needs of the ABNJ Project. The PSC meetings will *inter alia* assess: (i) project achievements against targets; and (ii) efficiency and effectiveness of project management.

The Budget Holder (Subregional Coordinator of the FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean [SLC]), will be responsible for financial monitoring and reporting to the World Bank. The Project Manager and SLC International Administrator will also have operational monitoring and management information responsibility on a day-to-day base and FAO representations in the region will provide administrative support in making payments, etc. as authorized by the budget holder.

The World Bank will provide specific project-related training where required. This will include application of the Fisheries Performance Indicator systems (FPI) for performance benchmarking, and operational aspects such as Safeguards. Specific needs will be determined at the Inception Workshop.

A detailed work plan and budget/logical framework will be developed within two months after the approval of this project for the general monitoring and monitoring activities and will comply with the reporting requirements.

D. Reporting arrangements

Inception Report

An inception report will be prepared by the Project Manager in collaboration with the IGFA upon the initiation of project implementation. This report will include a more detailed work plan and budget, including a list of immediate procurement needs

Six-monthly Progress Reports

The PMU will arrange with partners to prepare brief progress reports every six months (January-June) according to the established procedures with the World Bank. All consultants will prepare mission reports.

Annual Reports

The PMU will prepare brief annual reports that summarize project achievements on the basis of the six-monthly Progress Reports and may also contain relevant additional documentation

on technical and/or management aspects. The Annual Reports will be prepared on the eleventh month of each project year, and submitted through the Subregional Coordinator SLC to FAO headquarters for review and Official transmission to the Donor.

Terminal Report

The PMU at WECAFC/FAO will also be responsible for the preparation of a draft Terminal Project Report not later than four months before the end of the project.

Financial Reports

Financial reporting will be submitted in accordance with FAO and World Bank agreed reporting formats and scheduled within the overall framework including the submission of the final financial report.