

REGIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CARIBBEAN FISHERIES

2020 - 2025





S. Cox



Y. Laurent

Foreword

ODE TO THE CODE

The Caribbean's marine environment and fishing industry shape the region's lifestyle and cultural heritage, with small-scale fisheries (SSF) forming a large part of the social fabric and economy of many coastal communities.

We, Caribbean fisherfolk, are the heartbeat of the region. We risk our lives on a daily basis to provide an essential service that supports food security.

We've spent time in and around the ocean, and have personally seen the beauty, the fragility, and even the degradation of our planet's blue heart.

We highly value our traditional knowledge and see the importance of unlocking its potential to address significant challenges in the present and future.

We find ourselves on the frontline in the battle against climate change. Witnessing first hand real environmental and social changes that result in a decline in catches and incomes. Yet we remain resilient, despite the various adversities encountered, including the current COVID-19 pandemic.

We strive to 'think outside the box' by exploring alternative fisheries and promoting technological innovations that could revolutionize our sector.

As ecosystem stewards, we have positioned ourselves as important actors in the blue economy and will continue to advocate for blue justice.

Foreword

ODE TO THE CODE

In the words of Jacques Yves Costeau, "perhaps the time has come to formulate a moral code which would govern our relations with the great creatures of the sea as well as with those on dry land".

A code that promotes ecosystem stewardship to foster the social-ecological sustainability of a rapidly changing planet.

We solemnly pledge our commitment to uphold the articles of the code and ensure its successful implementation at regional, national and local levels in our 17 member states.

This code may be published as a document, but it's more than that, it is a legacy we wish to pass on to our children, grandchildren and future generations.

~Members of the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO).



N. Norris



JFCU



C. Gittens

BACKGROUND

EAF CODE OF CONDUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The development of the regional code of conduct was guided by the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF). The concept of EAF is used as a means of balancing both fishery and ecosystem-level goals, by taking into account the complexities, uncertainties and strong connections between human and environmental systems.

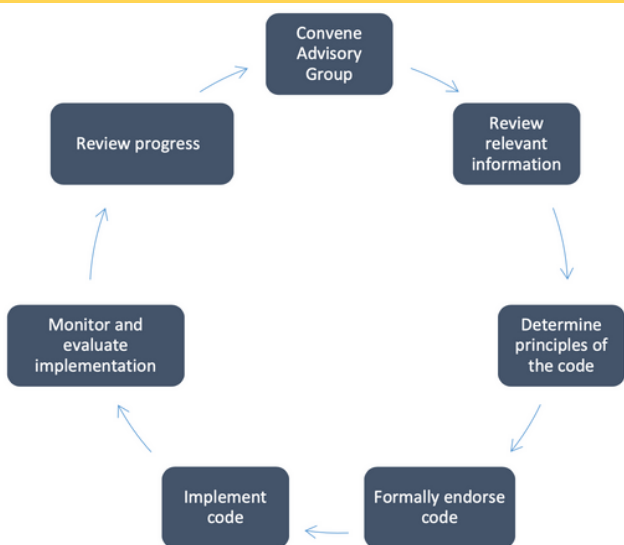


Figure 1: Regional code of conduct development process



In order to advance EAF management in the Caribbean, there is the need for a code of conduct which articulates a shared understanding of what EAF entails at the regional and national levels.

This code will serve as a guideline for current and future activities, as well as a benchmark against which it can be measured. The iterative process for code development is illustrated in Figure 1.

The articles of the code have been heavily influenced by the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), SSF Guidelines, the SSF Protocol under the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 13 and 14.



DFMR, Anguilla

INTRODUCTION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The regional code of conduct was formulated by the board members of the CNFO, with input from their membership, in an effort to increase participatory application of EAF. This may be achieved by enhancing ecosystem stewardship for fisheries sustainability.

This code sets out principles and standards of behaviour to ensure the well-being of fisherfolk through sustainable use, management, and development of both marine and freshwater living aquatic resources in the Caribbean.

The objectives of this code are:

(a) to promote the contribution of SSF to an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for the Caribbean;

(b) to enhance ecosystem stewardship for fisheries sustainability;

(c) to provide guidance for the development and implementation of participatory policies, strategies and legal frameworks for the enhancement of responsible and sustainable small-scale fisheries;
and

(d) to enhance public awareness and promote the advancement of knowledge on the culture, role, contribution and potential of SSF, considering traditional knowledge, and related constraints and opportunities.

Governance of Tenure and Resource Management

ARTICLE I

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

I.I Advocating for secure tenure rights to the resources that form the basis for our social and cultural well-being, our livelihoods and our sustainable development.

I.II Utilizing fishing practices that minimize harm to the aquatic environment and associated species and support the sustainability of the resource.

I.III Promoting participatory management systems, such as co-management arrangements that encourage equitable participation of women, vulnerable and marginalized groups – in the design, planning and, as appropriate, implementation of management measures.

I.IV Supporting monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) systems suitable for SSF, and participating in the collective management of the activity

I.V Ensuring that we are well represented in relevant local and national fisheries bodies and actively take part in relevant decision-making and fisheries policy-making processes.

I.VI Advocating for tenure rights of fisherfolk in marine managed areas by establishing fishing priority areas.

I.VII Advocating for tenure rights of SSF communities where transboundary and other similar issues exist.



H. Oxenford



H. Oxenford



P. Burke

Social Development, Employment, Decent Work

ARTICLE II:

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- II.I Employing integrated, ecosystem and holistic approaches to SSF management and development that take the complexity of our livelihoods into account.
- II.II Promoting decent work for all SSF workers, including both the formal and informal sectors.
- II.III Creating conditions for men and women of small-scale fishing communities to fish and to carry out fisheries-related activities in a safe environment.
- II.IV Addressing occupational health issues and unfair working conditions of fisherfolk by ensuring that the necessary legislation is in place and is implemented in accordance with regional and international standards.
- II.V Promoting social security and healthcare protection for workers in small-scale fisheries along the entire value chain.
- II.VI Supporting the development of and access to other services including savings, credit and insurance schemes, with special emphasis on ensuring the access of women to such services.
- II.VII Promoting investment in human resource development such as health, education, literacy, digital inclusion and other skills of a technical nature that generate added value to the fisheries resource.

Value Chains, Post-harvest and Trade

ARTICLE III

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

III.I Ensuring that all actors in the value chain are engaged in relevant decision-making processes, including vulnerable or marginalized groups.

III.II Recognizing the important role that women play in the post-harvest sub-sector and supporting improvements to facilitate women's participation in such work.

III.III Minimizing food loss and wastage throughout the value chain.

III.IV Seeking ways to create value addition through environmentally sustainable means.

III.V Supporting activities, programmes and policies to ensure that benefits from international trade are fairly distributed.

III.VI Safeguarding our natural resources to ensure local nutritional needs are met, while advancing international trade access.

III.VII Exploring alternative fisheries e.g. lionfish, diamondback squid, and facilitate trade access for the associated value-added products.

III. VIII Supporting fishing cooperatives in the marketing and trade of quality seafood.



I. Monnereau



L. Richardson



P. Burke



S. Cox

Gender Equality

ARTICLE IV

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

IV.I Promoting the equitable participation of women and women's groups in decision-making processes for fisheries management (both conservation and development).

IV.II Improving women's access to, and incentives for, training and information on the fisheries sector.

IV.III Enhancing awareness, sensitivity and commitment to gender equality and women's economic empowerment within the sector and at the regional policy level.

IV.IV Encouraging more women fisherfolk to get involved in fishing cooperatives or women's fisherfolk groups, assuming leadership roles to advance their collective interest and be represented at local and national forums.

IV.V Strengthening efforts to achieve food security, nutrition and develop marketing by improving women's access to markets and storage facilities.

IV.VI Improving the economic empowerment of women in the fisheries value-chain in the Caribbean by supporting entrepreneurship and facilitating access to fish resources and decision-making bodies.

Youth participation in SSF

ARTICLE V

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

V.I Fostering intergenerational partnerships that encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences, mutual learning, and meaningful action across generations.

V.II Institutionalising youth engagement into fisheries and aquaculture both at regional and national levels through integration of related subjects in school curricula.

V.III Engaging youth at policy-making and decision-making levels on issues that are related to youth involvement in fisheries and aquaculture development.

V.IV Appointing youth to decision-making organs, such as Fisheries Advisory Committees (FACs) and Ocean Governance Committees and allowing leadership in the daily running of youth related activities

V.V Advancing the use of technology in the industry by encouraging youth to innovate and pursue entrepreneurial activities.

V.VI Tailoring fisheries related information for youth audiences.

V.VII Mentoring youth to be leaders, so they are included in everything eventually and not just positions related to youths.





H. Billiny



J. Defoe

Disaster Risks & Climate Change

ARTICLE VI

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

VI.I Accepting that climate has and will continue to change and we will adapt accordingly through wise use of strategies and pursuing stronger collaborations.

VI.II Ensuring emergency procedures are updated, adhered to and executed efficiently and collaboratively both as individuals and as communities.

VI.III Actively participating in efforts to combat climate change, through applying energy efficiency strategies throughout the value chain.

VI.IV Participating in efforts to collect and analyze information on climate variability and climate change, including through sharing our experiences and perceptions.

VI.V Engaging in strategies to reduce our risk from climate hazards and natural disasters at the individual, community and sector levels, for example through livelihood diversification and insurance.

VI. VI Adopting sustainable fishing practices and technologies as a means to build climate resilience within our industry.

Policy Coherence, Institutional Coordination and Collaboration

ARTICLE VII

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

VII.I Recognizing the need for policy coherence with regard to existing policies, plans, actions and investments in climate-sensitive sectors of the Caribbean, in order to promote holistic development in small-scale fishing communities.

VII.II Ensuring that fisheries policy provides a long-term vision for sustainable SSF using an ecosystem approach.

VII.III Advocating for specific policy measures to ensure the harmonization of policies affecting the health of marine ecosystems.

VII.IV Promoting approaches which take into account the SSF interests and role in integrated coastal zone management.

VII.V Promoting collaboration among fisherfolk organisations, cooperatives and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) by establishing networks and platforms for exchange of experiences.

VII.VI Establishing and promoting the institutional structures and linkages necessary for achieving policy coherence, cross-sectoral collaboration and the implementation of holistic and inclusive ecosystem approaches in the fisheries sector.





M. Pena



C. Bissada

Information, Research and Communication

ARTICLE VIII

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

VIII.I Recognizing the importance of both traditional knowledge and good science to guiding our approaches to managing our resources and local governance.

VIII.II Accessing appropriate information to help us cope with existing problems including Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and to guide future decision-making, including information from other economic sectors.

VIII.III Participating in research efforts which seek to improve the development and management of fisheries.

VIII.IV Ensuring that the perspectives, experiences and concerns of marginalized and vulnerable persons are reflected in our communications and are represented in our negotiations.

VIII.V Establishing appropriate communication platforms at the community, national and regional level to promote our shared values through the use of communication tools which are accessible to all.

VIII.VI Promoting consumer awareness regarding the fishing industry and fisheries products and imparting local knowledge.

Capacity Development

ARTICLE IX

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

IX.I Participating in and creating democratic and representative structures to enhance our capacity to participate in decision-making process.

IX.II Taking advantage of knowledge, opportunities and training which become available to us in order to enhance our livelihoods.

IX.III Ensuring that actors at all stages of the value chain, as well as vulnerable and marginalized groups have access to and can fairly participate in capacity building opportunities.

IX.IV Recognizing that capacity development occurs as a two-way process of knowledge transfer and should build on existing knowledge.

IX.V Taking initiative to build capacity in our own communities through sharing of knowledge, experiences and resources, particularly to disadvantaged groups and individuals.

IX.VI Supporting the capacity development of young persons in the fisheries sector especially, as the next generation of the industry.

IX.VII Using our virtual leadership institute to develop the capacity of fisherfolk in areas of leadership, governance, and sustainable livelihoods.





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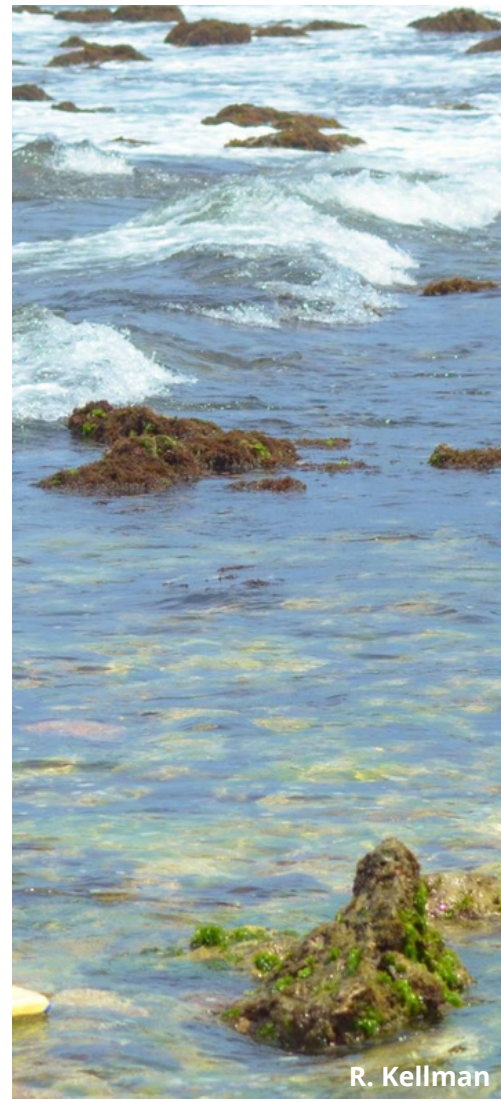
J. Thomas

Implementation, Support and Monitoring

ARTICLE X

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- X.I Ensuring the adoption and implementation of this code at the community, national and regional levels, in accordance with national priorities and circumstances.
- X.II Developing plans of action or other strategic guidance to support the application of this code, as necessary.
- X.III Supporting the incorporation of the code into existing policy, legislation or management frameworks at regional and national levels.
- X.IV Monitoring the implementation of this code through regular communication with representatives.
- X.V Facilitating the formation of regional and national-level platforms, with cross-sectoral representation and representation of strong CSOs, to oversee implementation of the code.
- X.VI Reviewing and adapting this code every five years, in accordance with new information and shifts in priorities.
- X.VII Sharing information about this Code widely at the international level with fisherfolk groups and networks committed to practicing similar codes.
- X.VIII Ensuring that this code always reflects our commitment to the inclusive and sustainable development of the fishing industry.



R. Kellman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE

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