



Fisher Folk Net

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A newsletter to share information among fisher folk organisations and people in fisheries on matters relating to sustainable fisheries management and other issues of interest to fisher folk organisations throughout the region

Welcome to Fisher Folk Net

You are reading the first issue of *Fisher Folk Net*, a newsletter of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat.

In this issue we provide a brief background to the project, share information on its outputs to date and tell you about recent national FFO consultations in some countries. This newsletter will be produced at least once in every three months. So keep a look out for it!

Project for fisher folk started



Terrence Phillips
CRFM project leader

With headquarters in Belize and an office in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the CRFM is the CARICOM fisheries agency established in 2003. Fisher Folk Net will inform fisher folk and to promote communication

among fisher folk organisations (FFOs), Fisheries Divisions and others in the CRFM project on *Development of Caribbean Fisher Folk Organisations*. This is a joint project with the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (CTA). The objective is:

To contribute to improved income earnings higher standards of living of fisher folk and sustainable use of fishery resources in the Caribbean

Specifically the project purpose is to have:

Institutional capacities (number of members, management and communication skills) of fisher folk organisations developed at the regional, national and community levels

This fisher folk project started in September 2006 to serve the Member States of the CRFM and it ends in July 2008.

National consultations: fisher folk leaders want national groups and a FFO network at the regional level

Consultations for the launch of national fisher folk organizations (NFOs) in The Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and Grenadines have gotten off to a good start.



Participants focus in Kingstown



Dominicans and Harold Guiste

The first consultation was held on 12 July in St. Kitts and Nevis. All consultations have been fairly well attended, mainly by the executive and ordinary members of fishing community primary fisher folk organisations (PFOs) and personnel from the Fisheries and Cooperatives Departments.

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Participants from many different organisations attended the sessions

Officials from various ministries and fisheries divisions welcomed the effort to launch NFOs and the regional network to provide improved services, such as technical assistance, training and representation to their members, and they offered their continued support.



Men and women participated actively in St. Lucia and Grenada too

The agendas of the consultations included presentations on the project; the topic Fisherfolk Organisations in the Caribbean: Networking for success; the Belize experience on forming and operating PFOs and NFOs; and the requirements for the launching of a NFO.



Chief Fisheries Officer and others in the St. Vincent consultation

Following the presentations, the leaders of the PFOs discussed and agreed among themselves to form NFOs as well as voiced their support for the formation of a regional network of fisherfolk organisations. NFOs should be established within one to five months.

Trainers' workshop for fisheries extension officers held in 2006

A 10-day workshop held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in December 2006 was aimed at enhancing the skills of fisheries and cooperative extension officers and fisher folk

leaders to provide better information, and advisory and training services to PFOs and NFOs. These skills will be used in the project.

Participants from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Island, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and the CRFM Secretariat attended the workshop.

Countries involved in the project

Countries are at different starting points. There are three groups of countries.

Group 1: countries with officially recognised NFOs are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

Group 2: countries with active primary fisher folk organisations (PFOs) but no officially registered NFO are The Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines

Group 3: countries with no active PFOs or NFOs are Haiti and Suriname

Several types of activities are planned to achieve the project objective and purpose, taking into account all three groups above.

Briefing note guides the project

In June 2007 a briefing note on fisher folk organisations in the Caribbean was prepared. The briefing note outlines major elements and options for how to proceed with this project. It maps the way forward in a series of project activities. Sections describe who 'fisher folk' are and some of their characteristics. It covers how to go about forming organisations and then operating them successfully. It also addresses communication and networking to scale-up from national to regional level. *Get your copy soon.*