

The Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP)

FACT SHEET

The Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) is a binding treaty focusing on cooperation and collaboration of Caribbean people, fishermen and governments in conserving, managing and sustainably utilising fisheries and related ecosystems. The policy supports the welfare and well-being of Caribbean people, who all benefit from a strong regional fisheries policy. The comprehensive policy was drafted, revised and approved in recent years at virtually every level of CARICOM governments, except at the very highest level. All that remains for the policy to enter into force is the signature of at least eight CARICOM heads of state. The time has come.

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) is committed to helping create the impetus for states to take the necessary steps toward implementing the policy, emphasising the shared linkage of all Caribbean peoples to the sea, and the importance of preserving and protecting the fisheries resource for future generations to come.

CCCFP purpose

CCCFP affects everyone in one way or another, as do the fisheries. Caribbean fisheries impact so many lives, either through direct employment of fishers, or by employment of people in wholesale, retail, processing, transport, export, fishing boat supply and repair, or sport and recreational fishing tourism and hospitality. There is also the consumer connection—there are not many folks in the Caribbean who do not eat seafood.

The policy is designed to foster effective cooperation and collaboration among participant nations in Conservation, Management, Sustainable Utilisation and Development of the fisheries resource and related ecosystems in the Caribbean region to maximise benefits for all Caribbean people. It addresses the need to build capacity amongst fishers and optimise the social and economic returns from the fisheries, which are a common thread throughout Caribbean societies.

Protecting and preserving the resource

Fisheries all around the world, including the Caribbean Sea, are under pressure. Sadly, it is already proven in some areas that the sea can indeed run out of fish. There is only one Caribbean. It can't simply be traded in for a newer model when it wears out, so it is imperative that we take care of it. The CCCFP promotes recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area of sustainable development, so that the level of fishing effort should not exceed the level of sustainable use. Preventing, deterring and eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing to preserve the livelihoods and welfare of fisherfolk are key elements of the CCCFP. It strengthens, upgrades, harmonises and modernises fisheries legislation in the region and fosters better cooperation and information sharing at all levels.

Climate change is very real in the Caribbean, where fisherfolk are observing rising sea levels, increased storms and hurricanes, coastal erosion and changing, unpredictable weather and fish migration patterns, all of which adversely affect their livelihoods. To address this, the CCCFP integrates environmental, coastal and marine management consideration into fisheries policies, safeguarding the fisheries and related ecosystems from threats and lessening impacts of climate change or natural disasters.

Creating jobs and improving incomes

CCCFP aims to help change the perception of the fishery sector, giving it the greater status that it deserves. The policy encourages more product diversification, ending the over-exploitation of some species and beginning the pursuit of others that are either under- or unexploited. There exists the need for fishers to invest, modernise, upgrade, innovate and improve their market positioning. With greater cooperation amongst fishers, they can add value by processing more of their catch in order to capture more of the profit. CCCFP also supports more business ventures in aquaculture.

Certain articles of the CCCFP aim to help fishers meet ongoing challenges by expanding market and fisheries research and market access, helping transform the sector to one that is more market-oriented, internationally competitive and environmentally sustainable, based on the highest international standards of quality and sanitary conditions. The CARICOM region's perennial trade deficits will shrink as a better performing commercial fishing sector increases trade and export earnings.





Strengthening food and nutrition security

Caribbean people owe a substantial portion of their nutrition to the sea's bounty. Going fishing and enjoying the catch is woven into the very fabric of our culture and traditions. The sea also serves as something of a safety net for us in difficult times. If we are hungry, but have little cash on hand, we can go fishing. Small-scale fishers play a key role by creating more jobs and also ensuring food security and good nutrition across the region. Thus, it is imperative that we all take a structured, balanced approach, avoiding depletion of the stock while also assuring consistent supply to Caribbean markets. CCCFP harmonises sustainable fisheries management and post-harvest practices while promoting competitive trade and stable market conditions. It improves standards for quality assurance and seafood safety by requiring participating nations to establish protocols for sanitary and phytosanitary measures so that the seafood we consume is not only good for us, but is also of the highest quality.



Giving fisherfolk a bigger say

In addition to large-scale fishing, the CCCFP considers the rights of traditional, subsistence, artisanal and small-scale fishers. The policy carries forward the same participatory approach that was used in its drafting, when fishers and their organisations were repeatedly consulted. There is more empowerment for fishers, ensuring their involvement in decision making. A key principle of the CCCFP is to combine the best available scientific information with fishers' traditional knowledge of the resources, habitats and environmental, economic and social factors.

Supporting the CCCFP

The fishing sector's infinite reach, spreading macroeconomic and social development benefits via employment, is throughout Caribbean society. Fisheries resource management and protection is for all people in the Caribbean. Please urge your leaders to support the CCCFP, so that we can keep making progress, improving livelihoods and assuring the survival of our beautiful sea and all its riches for many generations to come.

B E N E F I T S O F C C C F P

- Biodiversity protection in the regional marine environment
- Increased regional food and nutrition security
- Better research supporting fisheries development and management
- Greater income for fishers and wealth creation through social and economic development of the sector
- More investment opportunities in the fishing industry for CARICOM entrepreneurs
- Integrated regulation and enforcement to minimise any regional sectoral conflicts
- Increased regional market and economic competitiveness for the sector
- Unified standards for quality assurance and food safety
- Improved regional fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance to reduce illegal fishing
- Coordinated regional and national data and information systems for better data sharing and open access to all
- Recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area of sustainable development



Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism



www.crfm.int

Headquarters

secretariat@crfm.int

Tel.: (501) 223-4443 - Fax: (501) 223-4446
Belize City - Belize

Eastern Caribbean Office

crfmsvg@crfm.int

Tel.: (784) 457-3474 - Fax: (784) 457-3475
Kingstown - St. Vincent & the Grenadines



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