



PRESS RELEASE

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CRFM-JICA hosted COASTFISH regional workshop readies countries for pilot activities

Six countries of the Eastern Caribbean are moving ahead with community-based fisheries management, in the context of the “Satoumi Concept”

Belize City, Friday, 9 September 2022 (CRFM)—The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) convened a two-day regional workshop under the Japan-funded project—*Strengthening Sustainable Use and Management of Coastal Fisheries Resources in CARICOM Countries (COASTFISH)*—earlier this week at Bay Gardens Hotel, Saint Lucia.

This event was a follow-up to the first regional workshop, held electronically in July 2021. On this occasion, there was in-depth discussion about the success of co-management in Japan and how the pilot projects in the six target countries—Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines—could contribute to the introduction of co-management and improve coastal resource management. This second regional workshop afforded participants the opportunity to develop much needed actions in fishing communities, and to look more closely at the management of Marine Protected Areas and Marine Managed Areas, and how to enhance the role of resource users and stakeholders.

Honorable Alfred Prospere, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Rural Development, Saint Lucia, opened the event. Ms. Emma Hippolyte, Parliamentary Representative for Soufriere, Fisheries officials from all participating countries, the Project Team of IC NET Ltd of Japan and the JICA Saint Lucia Office also participated in the event.

In his official remarks, Minister Prospere applauded the work being done by the COASTFISH team in Saint Lucia, which he said supports the implementation of the strategies outlines in the National Fisheries Policy which Cabinet Ministers in Saint Lucia had approved just last week, to guide the planning and development of the fisheries sector for the period 2020 to 2030.

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Minister Prospere said: “This project focuses on enhancing the ecosystem function in the coastal communities by integrating both government and community members in activities that involve both environmental and resource protection. It is also noted that this project aims to encourage the improvement in the livelihoods of fisherfolk by promoting sustainable development and innovative resource management. The steps that have been taken as part of this project would assist Saint Lucia in *‘implementing effective adaptation actions to strengthen the sustainability of the islands fisheries and fishery-dependent businesses and the security of fisheries-dependent livelihoods under a changing climate’.*”

Mr. Thomas Nelson, Deputy Chief Fisheries Officer, Saint Lucia Fisheries Department, and Dr. Sandra Grant, Deputy Executive Director, CRFM Secretariat, also delivered remarks.

Dr. Grant noted that the CRFM’s previous collaboration with JICA on the Caribbean Fisheries Co-management Project (CARIFICO) demonstrated to fishing communities the tremendous benefits of co-management, resulting in improved catches and higher incomes for fishers from participating Member States who used the Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs).

She noted that the intervention had very tangible results for the wider fishing community, including the formation of new fisherfolk organizations and the involvement of fishers in all aspects of the project—from consultation, deployment of the fishing gear, developing rules to regulate activities around the FADs and collecting fisheries data.

Dr. Grant said that the CRFM and its partners would like to build on the lessons learnt during the CARIFICO Project, as they embark on Phase 2 of the COASTFISH project. She explained that the JICA-funded COASTFISH, in collaboration with government agencies, fishers and local partners, aims to develop and implement co-management projects for each country. The COASTFISH project will help move countries to better management, utilization, and protection, and conservation of the coastal and marine resources, while ensuring that the resources are used responsibly to contribute optimally to our development.

Target activities of the COASTFISH project are:

- Establishment and strengthening of marine managed areas
- Research/Monitoring activities
- Resource Management planning
- Restoration of coastal ecosystems such as coral

During Phase 1, countries identified the issues surrounding Marine Managed Areas and co-management. Dr. Grant said that the pilot projects to be developed during Phase 2 will seek to address these issues and build capacity of the fisherfolks in the co-management approach with an emphasis on mainstreaming gender in management and along the value chain.

Makeba Felix, Fisheries Biologist, Department of Fisheries, Saint Lucia, said in her closing remarks that, “On the heels of a global pandemic that drastically affected the economic outputs of our fisheries sector, it is of high priority that we work with our fisherfolk to support recovery efforts. This project and the technical support received from the consultants to realise the ‘Satoumi’ concept will help our countries realise this goal.”

She added that, “Further, the lessons learnt through the implementation of the various activities demonstrating ‘Satoumi’ will be far reaching – beyond the shores of the OECS but more broadly the Caribbean Community through the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism.”

Dr. Seko Akiya, the team leader of the project, thanked everyone for their participation. He said, "...this was a very good opportunity for discussion among us... After this seminar, we will continue to keep close communication with all of you, and we look forward to your continued support."

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ABOUT THE CRFM:

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) was officially inaugurated on 27 March 2003 in Belize City, Belize, where it is headquartered, following the signing of the "Agreement Establishing the CRFM" on 4 February 2002. It is an inter-governmental organization whose mission is "to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region's fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region."

CRFM social media links:

You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheCRFM>

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CaribFisheries>

ABOUT JICA

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was established to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation as well as the sound development of Japanese and global economy by supporting the socioeconomic development, recovery or economic stability of developing regions.

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