

# PRESS RELEASE

## CRFM and GRÓ FTP engage in Iceland on strategies to strengthen Caribbean fisheries

Belize City, Belize, 3 March 2026 (CRFM)—Representatives of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), headquartered in Belize, and the [GRÓ Fisheries Training Programme \(FTP\)](#), met last week to explore ways to strengthen cooperation with CRFM [Member States](#) and to further enhance the region's capacity in fisheries management and development. The discussion took place on Friday, February 27, 2026, at GRÓ FTP in Reykjavik, Iceland. Dr. Marc Williams, CRFM Executive Director, met with Mr. Thor Ásgeirsson, GRÓ FTP Director, and Stefán Úlfarsson, Specialist, to chart the way forward.

This engagement builds upon 18 years of collaboration between the parties. The CRFM and GRÓ FTP, formerly the United Nations University Fisheries Training Program (UNU FTP), entered into a memorandum of understanding in [2008](#) to enhance institutional capacity. Under this arrangement, Caribbean fisheries practitioners continue to benefit from GRÓ FTP training, including short courses, six-month training programs, as well as master's and doctoral degrees.



From left to right: Dr. Marc Williams, CRFM Executive Director; GRÓ FTP 2025-2026 fellow - Ms. Deandra Roberts of Jamaica; Mr. Thor Ásgeirsson, GRÓ FTP Director; and GRÓ FTP 2025-2026 fellow - Ms. Annakay Crawford of Jamaica

Currently, the CRFM and GRÓ FTP are conducting a capacity needs assessment of the CRFM fisheries administrations and the CRFM Secretariat. Two GRÓ FTP fellows from Jamaica, Ms. Annakay Crawford and Ms. Deandra Roberts, are gathering and analyzing data for the assessment, which will provide the evidence that the Member States and the CRFM Secretariat need to chart the future direction of their respective organizations.

On Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at the FAO's 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Subcommittee Meeting on Fisheries Management in Iceland, Ms. Crawford and Ms. Roberts briefed the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines delegation—Honorable Conroy Huggins, Minister of Fisheries, Marine and Land Conservation, and Climate Resilience, and Mr. Kris Isaacs, Senior Fisheries Officer—on their progress. The delegation reaffirmed its commitment to support the successful completion of the assessment reports.



Honorable Conroy Huggins at COFI meeting

Last September, the CRFM Ministerial Council—comprised of ministers responsible for fisheries, aquaculture and the blue economy from across the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)—issued a resolution approving the CRFM Capacity Needs Assessment Roadmap 2025. The Council said it looks forward to the successful completion of the regional and national capacity assessment summaries that would support a more holistic response in addressing the gaps at both the regional and national levels.

Dr. Williams said: *“The CRFM Secretariat acknowledges and thanks all Member States that have been contributing to the Capacity Needs Assessment. These inputs have been essential in enabling a comprehensive regional analysis of our institutional and human capacities, in accordance with the directives of the CRFM Ministerial Council. Continued collaboration is critical as the process advances toward validation and subsequent presentation to the Council.”*



Mr. Kris Isaacs - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines delegation member

Since 2008, sixty-five (65) Caribbean fisheries professionals have benefited from training through GRÓ FTP. Several of the program's alumni have moved on to leadership roles within fisheries administrations, the CRFM Secretariat, and the CRFM Ministerial Council. Notably, Ministerial Council member, the Honorable Jullan Defoe, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Blue and Green Economy in Dominica, and the CRFM Secretariat's Executive Director, Dr. Williams, both received fisheries training from GRÓ FTP.

GRÓ FTP, which promotes sustainable use and management of living aquatic resources, has reaffirmed its desire to continue supporting the development of fisheries management capacity and the training of future Caribbean leaders.

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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.



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