



# BARBADOS FISHERIES POLICY

2023 - 2033

Prepared under the guidance of:  
Barbados Fisheries Division

With the support of:  
The Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United Nations  
(FAO)

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OVERVIEW

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LONG TERM  
OBJECTIVES

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POLICY  
STATEMENTS  
AND  
STRATEGIES



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# " A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE BARBADOS FISHING INDUSTRY IS ATTAINABLE THROUGH COLLABORATION "

*- Hon. Adrian R. Forde, Rph.*

## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Our fishing industry is of great economic and social importance. It has shaped the cultural heritage of Barbadians supporting many artistic pursuits in the orange economy, and is a main contributor to the blue economy. For these reasons, we need to ensure the sustainability of this sector and the availability of marine resources for future generations.

Our course of action toward a sustainable fisheries sector has been met with several challenges, with some issues like Climate Change being beyond our control. However, we remain committed to advancing the sector by implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management. This policy is a testament to our commitment and provides the foundation for action and decision making in the fisheries sector.

A sustainable future for the Barbados fishing industry is attainable through collaboration. Charting the way forward to achieving our vision will require inter-sectoral coordination, productive partnerships with the private sector, and continued youth engagement. Technological advancements and innovation will also play an integral role in achieving our vision.



Hon. Adrian R. Forde, Rph.  
Ministry of the Environment and National Beautification,  
Green and Blue Economy

# ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AIS	Automatic Identification System
ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
BARNUFO	Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations
BERT	Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CCCCFP	Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CERMES	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
CLME	Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem
CNFO	Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations
CODEX	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CROSQ	CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EAF	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAC	Fisheries Advisory Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FD	Fisheries Division
FMP	Fisheries Management Plan
GCFI	Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GT	Gross tonnage
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HDI	Human development Index
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
LOA	Length Overall
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MMABE	Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OSPESCA	Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RFMO	Regional Fishery Management Organization
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary (measures)
SSF	Small Scale Fisheries
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar
UWI	University of the West Indies
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

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## POLICY STATEMENTS AND STRATEGIES

This section outlines 18 statements that highlight mutually-agreed priorities related to promoting a sustainable fishing industry in Barbados.



## IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

Considerations for implementation of this policy are presented in this section. The need for a M&E framework and action plan is also outlined.

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# FOREWORD

## Barbados Fisheries Policy

Barbados through the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy (MMABE), now MENB, engaged in a process of developing a new Fisheries Policy and its supporting legislation to properly guide sustainable fisheries development and management. In this context, the Government of Barbados has officially requested FAO's assistance to support the overall process of revision of both the policy and legislative frameworks.

The overall policy exercise is part of the on-going Blue Economy agenda of Barbados. Its focus is however the fisheries sector (including aquaculture). The aim of the Barbados Fisheries Policy is to apply the main general orientations and development objectives of the country to the fisheries sector, but within the constraints and opportunities imposed by the specificities of the fisheries sector.

The Barbados Fisheries Policy provides for a set of principles and guidelines that will serve as an overall framework for guiding public action and related investments in the sector. The Policy integrates the concept of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and promotes Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM). This approach will also guide the development of the forthcoming Sustainable Fisheries Management and Development Suite of laws and an updated Fisheries Management Plan.

The proposed duration of the Fisheries Policy is 10 years, which corresponds to a temporal horizon that is commensurate with the need for guiding public action and related investments in the sector over a sufficient time-period.

It also anticipates the need for a review after a maximum 10 years' time so as to reflect major changes in the political, economic, social and ecosystem conditions. The monitoring and evaluation of the Fisheries Policy will also include a mid-term evaluation aimed at possibly adjusting the operational objectives and public action in the sector.

The present document is the final version of the Barbados Fisheries Policy for the period 2023-2033. It includes a vision, policy statements and strategies to guide operational decision making in a manner that supports the sustainability of fisheries resources and contributes to the social and economic development of Barbados.

The policy's preparation involved convening four consultative meetings with a cluster of public and private stakeholders (23rd, 24th, 27th and 28th January 2020) that were facilitated by the Fisheries Division (FD) of MENB formerly MMABE. A one-day workshop bringing together the stakeholders of all the connected sectors and institutions was also held on 30th January 2020 with the objective of presenting and consolidating the preliminary findings from the consultations. Following consultations, the first draft of the policy document was circulated widely for stakeholder feedback and revisions were made accordingly.



# OVERVIEW

## Barbados Fisheries Sector

The fisheries sector plays a substantial role in the social and economic development of Barbados and contributes to the country's rich culture, including its tangible and intangible heritage, and indirectly to the tourism industry (Fisheries Division, 2004). The sector consists of marine commercial and recreational capture fisheries, aquaculture and post-harvest activities. These activities are administered under the *Barbados Fisheries Regulations*.

The local fishing industry relies on multi-gear, multi-species and several seasonal fisheries (Fisheries Division, 2012). Target species range from near shore reef fish to highly migratory offshore large pelagics. The major fishery has traditionally been for the flyingfish and associated large pelagics, principally dolphinfish and wahoo. There are also significant landings of large highly migratory pelagic species such as tunas, billfish (white and blue marlins, sailfish) and swordfish. Landings from the nearshore are dominated by reef species such as snappers, parrotfish, squirrelfish and surgeonfish. Other fisheries include coastal pelagics (e.g. jacks, herrings, and barracudas), sharks and rays, sea urchins (sea eggs) and shellfish (conchs and lobsters).

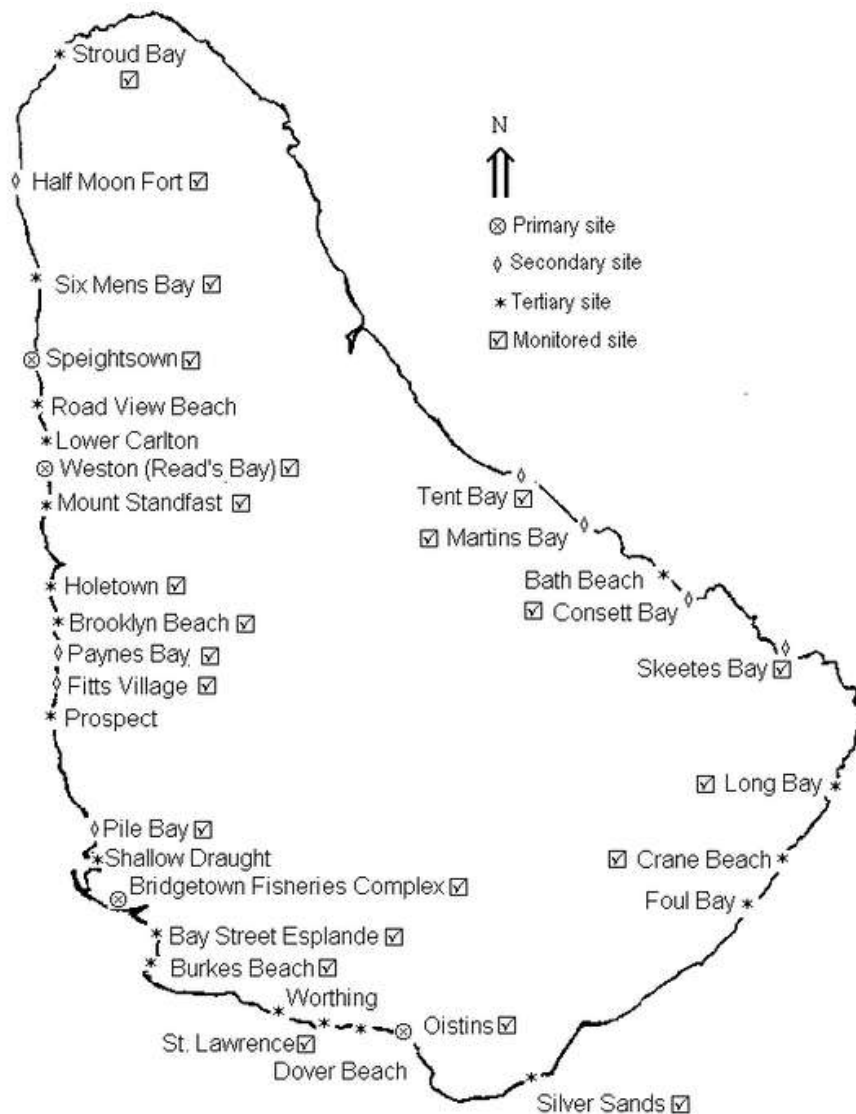
The status of the commercially exploited fish stocks vary from stable in the case of flyingfish and dolphinfish to over-exploited in the case of sea eggs. The status of a number of stocks is unknown (Fisheries Division, 2012).

The local fishing fleet (in 2016) comprises an estimated 1,150 registered fishing vessels which varies from small open boats, or Moses (3-6m LOA) and targeting nearshore species, to large (12-24m LOA) longliners propelled by between 135 and 600 HP inboard engines and targeting highly migratory pelagics (Government of Barbados, 2017).

A total of 3,230 people are registered in various roles in the fishing industry including boat owners, boat agents, fishers, fish vendors, and fish processors. When considering the entire fishery value chain, based on a study conducted by CRFM in 2013, CRFM estimated that employment was closer to 8,800 or 6.2 percent of the labour force (CRFM, 2018).

There are approximately 31 fish landing and vending sites around the island (Figure 1), categorized according to type of physical infrastructure and facilities as primary (markets), secondary (sheds) and tertiary (beaches).

The majority of catches are landed at the primary sites and are often sold by the boat captain or owner directly to fish vendors (predominantly women), processors and consumers (Fisheries Division, 2004).



**Figure 1: Fish landing sites in Barbados. Source: McConney et al. 2003**

Total annual production from capture fisheries in Barbados has varied between 1,300 to 3,500 metric tonnes per year over the decade (2005-2016). Average production for this period was close to 2,300 tons per year, which represents revenue estimated at close to USD\$ 8 million per year (CRFM 2018).

Exports of fish represent only a small share of local landings, i.e. about 2% of the total fish production. The main exported species is yellowfin tuna, with the USA being the major destination market. Tuna is exported whole (headed and gutted) with little more value added. Barbados has so far not complied with Europe's Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures and therefore cannot access the EU fish markets.

The fisheries sector in Barbados is also characterized by the existence of significant fish trade and processing activities supplied by fish imports - close to 6,234 tons in 2016 (valued at USD\$ 23.3 million) (CRFM 2018).

In 2016, fish imports were composed of chilled, fresh or frozen fish (3,042 tons), processed fish (691 tons) and canned fish (2,501 tons) (CRFM 2018). Fish and fishery products from these activities are for the local and tourism market. These imports supplement local fish landings and are a necessity to promote food security.

There is currently only one commercial aquaculture farm operating in the island that produces red tilapia and crayfish. There are also some small-scale operations involved in the rearing of tilapia spp. primarily in ponds. A demonstration initiative of an aquaponics fish farm has also been developed recently.

Total farmed fish production in Barbados was estimated at around 11 tonnes in 2011 (FAO, 2016). No mariculture activities currently exist but there were a few initiatives attempted in the past.

# GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE FISHERIES SECTOR



The Barbados Fisheries Division in the Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy (MENB) has the primary responsibility for the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The ministry recognises the importance of the fisheries sector and its potential to increase its contribution to income, employment and foreign exchange earnings.

Support is provided to the fisheries sector through a wide range of measures, which include but are not limited to:

- advancing the social and economic status of fishers and their families;
- improving fisheries infrastructure, fishing vessels, fishing gear and fishing methods;
- promoting self-sufficiency through increased marine and aquaculture production;
- providing duty-free concessions for fishers, boat owners and processors, covering imported fishing and processing equipment and materials;
- facilitating subsidies for the repair of vessels;
- registering and inspecting vessels;
- licensing of vessels and fisherfolk;
- mentoring and supporting fisherfolk organisations;
- facilitating training and communication initiatives; and
- conducting research.

## Policy Environment

While the Fisheries Division is the lead agency responsible for fisheries, a number of other government departments share responsibility for regulating aspects of the fisheries sector. A list of relevant policy guidance and associated lead agencies is presented below:

- Barbados Sustainable Development Policy (Ministry of Environment and National Beautification (MENB))
- National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2006 - 2025 (Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment (MFEI))
- Barbados National Energy Policy (Ministry of Energy and Water Resources)
- Barbados' National Policy Framework and Sectoral Directives for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Actions (MENB)
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (Coastal Zone Management Unit, MENB formerly MMABE)
- Forthcoming Blue Economy Policy and Road Map (MENB formerly MMABE)

The main international and regional commitments and obligations of relevance to the Barbados fisheries sector are outlined in the Appendix. These obligations provide the guiding principles for framing national policy initiatives.

# LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

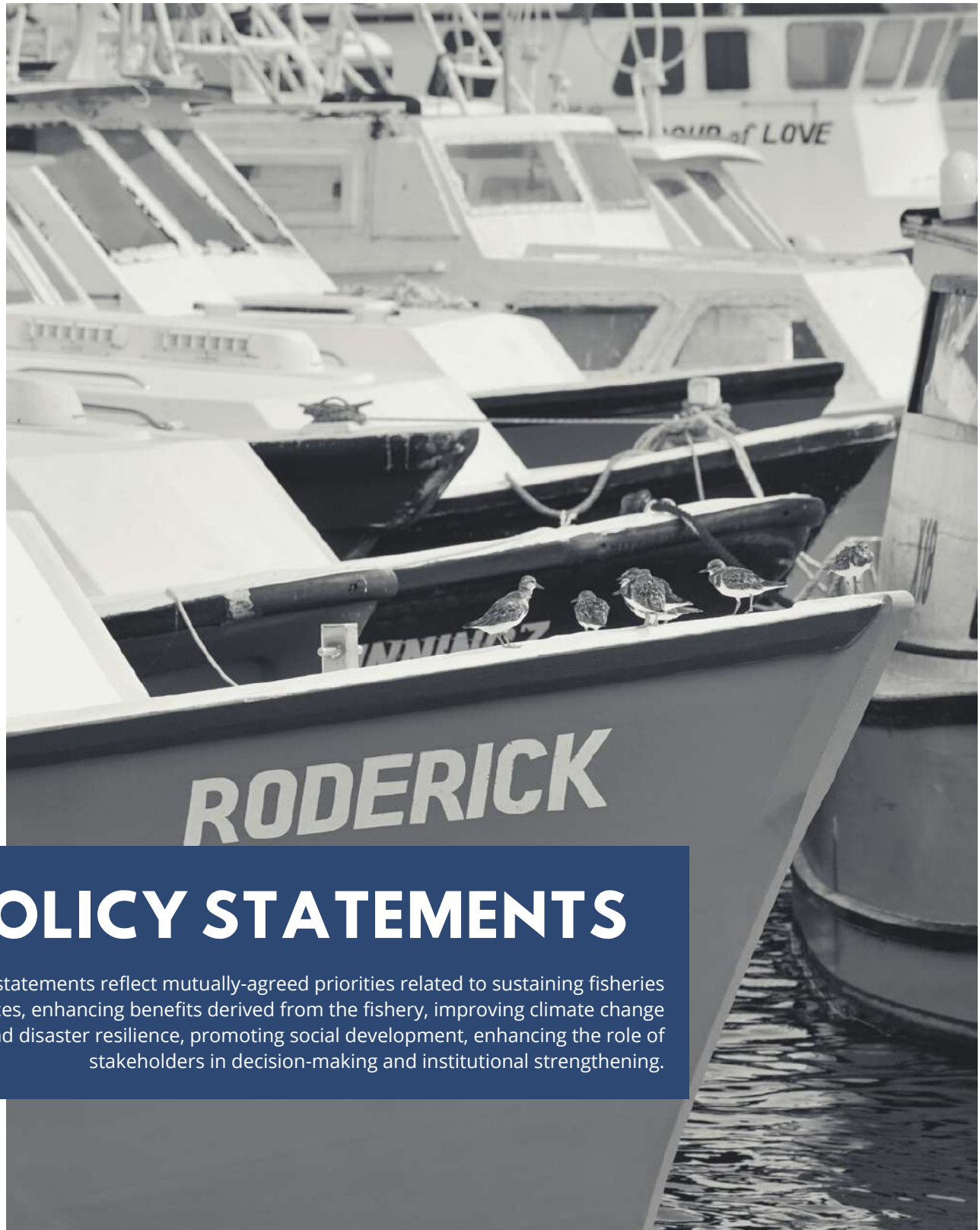


## OBJECTIVES

- 1) Rationalise the exploitation of fishery resources through improved control of fishing capacity, better regulation of the access to resources, and enhanced fisheries management systems, whilst paying due attention to the promotion of an updated FMP and the adoption of EAF principles.
- 2) Contribute to the protection and rehabilitation of coastal and marine ecosystems by regulating land-based and offshore pollution.
- 3) Improve and diversify value chains by making them more resilient to logistical disruption and reducing economic post-harvest losses.
- 4) Improve sanitary conditions, and promote a safe working environment at fish markets and aboard fishing vessels.
- 5) Modernize and make the fishing industry green by promoting fuel efficiency, self-sufficiency for electrical energy and the use of fish processing wastes, and water conservation.
- 6) Promote social development of fisherfolk through improving their level of education, social protection and safety at sea and thus facilitating their integration into the Blue Economy, adaptation to climate change and disaster resilience processes.
- 7) Promote responsible and sustainable forms of aquaculture and aquaponics for commercial production with particular emphasis on the impacts of climate change, environmental, health and sanitary considerations.

Achieving the above objectives will require that the following main constraints be adequately overcome:

- Weak data and information collection and inadequate capacity of the research system in all domains needed to advise and support sustainable development and management of fisheries and related value chains;
- Weak capacity in fisheries economic analysis and strategic planning;
- Insufficient human and financial means allocated to institutions responsible for the delivery of adequate services in support of sustainable fisheries development and management;
- Weak functional relations between the fisheries administration and decision-making at the ministerial level;
- Limited development capacities of economic actors involved in fishing and related value chains and in fish trade due to limited human resources (investors and workers), and significant risks involved with respect to financial, technical, sanitary and natural disaster conditions;
- Low attractiveness of the fisheries sector due to the inadequacy of infrastructure and services at landing sites and the lack of other enabling elements of the business environment including credit and investment facilities;
- Low level of participation of fishery stakeholders in the management of the fisheries sector, which actually is currently mostly limited to consultation; this can be explained in part by weaknesses in the capacity of private and community actors.



## POLICY STATEMENTS

These 18 statements reflect mutually-agreed priorities related to sustaining fisheries resources, enhancing benefits derived from the fishery, improving climate change and disaster resilience, promoting social development, enhancing the role of stakeholders in decision-making and institutional strengthening.

# PILLAR I: FISHERIES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



## POLICY STATEMENT 1 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE THE FISHING VESSEL REGISTRATION AND LICENSING SYSTEMS

Establish and maintain a national register of fishing vessels and a national licensing system that meet national, regional and international requirements in support of fisheries management and of combatting IUU fishing. This is key in regional instruments such as the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) and the Regional Plan of Action on IUU fishing.

The current registration and licensing systems in Barbados does not meet such requirements and it now has become urgent to rectify this. This would involve introducing specific provisions in the fisheries legislation and allocating specific resources to implement the new systems.

### Strategy:

- Review and update the existing database of registered fishing vessels, active fisherfolk (fishers, fish vendors, boat owners, boat agents etc), licenses issued, records of infractions and location data of vessels.
- Ensure that the database is backed up on a bi-weekly basis at the government's Data Processing Department.
- Perform quarterly quality assurance checks to minimise data redundancies and maintain data integrity.
- Restrict and manage user access to databases to ensure data integrity.
- Promote the installation of Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) and/or Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) aboard fishing vessels to support data collection.
- Develop a user-friendly digital registration process to increase efficiency. This process can be supported by online payment systems.
- Establish a mechanism for inter-agency coordination in the licensing process.

# PILLAR I: FISHERIES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

## POLICY STATEMENT 2 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

In the current data collection system, fish landings are recorded daily at major fish landing sites. Fish prices are also recorded at some fish markets. However, these statistics are not collected with a sufficient level of detail as the main purpose for collecting this data is for accounting of market tolls.

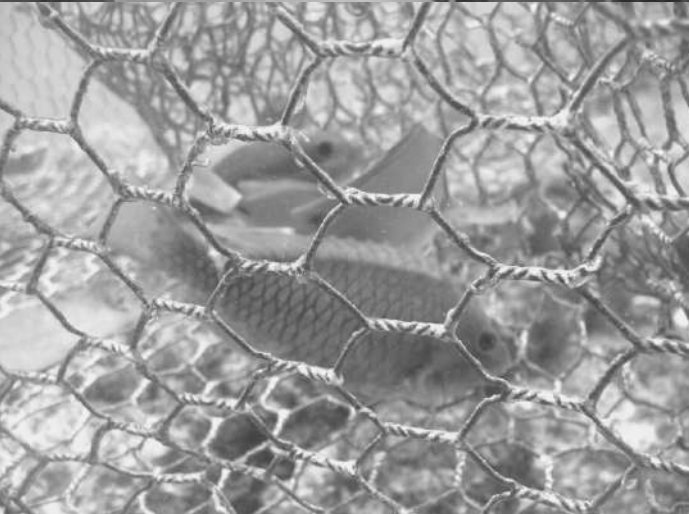
Linkages of a landing event to specific fishing effort information (e.g. number of days fishing) or to a specific fishery (defined in FMP) are difficult to deduce based on data available. Generally speaking the existing data collection and information system is mostly for fiscal and administrative purposes and cannot meet research and management needs.

### Strategy:

- Refine the existing data collection system to support scientific research and economic analysis related to the fisheries sector and monitoring and evaluation of the FMP
- Make a clear distinction between the catch and effort data collection system and the system for collecting market taxes (tolls).
- Make the use of electronic logbooks mandatory in the conditions linked to a license for vessels over 12m length overall (LOA).
- Develop an automated telephonic system (MySQL database system linked to a USSD cell phone data transfer system) for the collection of catch and effort data on vessels over 12m LOA.
- Develop partnerships with other governmental or non-governmental organisations including educational institutions involved in the collection of data and information of relevance for the management of the fisheries sector.
- Promote the involvement of fishers and related actors in the gathering, collection and use of biophysical, fish landings and socio-economic data;
- Develop a comprehensive fishery information system with appropriate quality control protocols and ensure the publication of periodic bulletins and statistical yearbooks on the fisheries sector in Barbados on a regular basis;
- Organise forums on a regular basis to allow exchange of key data and information between public and private stakeholders.



# PILLAR I: FISHERIES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



## POLICY STATEMENT 3 – GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE THE FISHERIES RESEARCH SYSTEM

Understanding the state of resources, the factors that impact them and the correct management response in order to provide for long-term sustainability is the basis of sustainable fisheries sector development and an essential function of research. Research should also support decision-making in fisheries management including through elaborating management scenarios taken into consideration; biological, oceanographic, environmental, technical, social and economic considerations. It is urgent to ensure that demand-driven research becomes the basis to drive development and management of the fishery sector.

### Strategy:

- Develop a research agenda and strategy in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI), other appropriate research institutions, relevant industry stakeholders at the regional and international level, and resource users, to meet applicable obligations per regional international agreements to which Barbados is a signatory.
- This research strategy should consider inter alia the following activities: social and economic analyses, stock assessment methods for all species harvested, specific research work on the determination of minimum size of catch for species of most importance while making use of the existing scientific literature in the region, further investigation on the use of traps, seine nets and spearguns and their bio-ecological impact on the reef ecosystems;
- Promote innovative funding mechanisms through developing partnership with regional and international research institutions such as the UWI and linking the implementation of the research agenda with that of the international and regional bodies or mechanisms (CRFM, ICCAT, CLME+SAP).
- Develop methods and tools to take into consideration the traditional and practical knowledge of fishers for the conducting of research work (e.g. fishing techniques, mapping of grounds, changes in the ecosystems, etc.)
- Make use of the available regional and international scientific networking with reference in particular to CRFM, GCFI, WECAFC and ICCAT mechanisms.

# PILLAR I: FISHERIES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

## POLICY STATEMENT 4 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL MODERNIZE AND STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITIES OF THE FISHERIES AUTHORITY

The provision of adequate development and management services by the fisheries authority should be seen as a key condition for the satisfactory realization of potential for growth, employment and food security in the fisheries sector in Barbados. Supporting the modernization and strengthening of fisheries administration should therefore be seen as a public investment aimed at producing returns on investments that are commensurate with the substantial current and potential role of the fisheries sector in the economy. This should also involve the introduction of cost-recovery systems for certain services and fees charged for licenses in order to contribute to the financing of fisheries management services.

### Strategy:

- Restructuring the BFD such that it can efficiently perform clearly differentiated and defined functions relating to exploitation (e.g. maintenance of registries, issuance of licences), management (e.g. promotion and implementation of FMP, development of fisheries information system, carrying out of specific studies), research, and MCS.
- Establish a fisheries economic function for the BFD to support and enrich decision-making in the fisheries sector; this would involve economic valuation of both monetised and non-monetised aspects of fisheries and related value chains, strategic planning in support of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), evaluation of management scenarios, valuation of economic losses resulting from IUU, communication and defense of the interests of the fisheries sector in the context of the Blue Economy.
- Capacity-building of new and existing staff through participation in refreshment courses, study tours abroad and partnerships with regional and/or international institutions in relation to responsible fisheries management, and climate change, and as well as participating in fishing trips to deepen their knowledge about issues and challenges from the local fishers' standpoint.



# PILLAR I: FISHERIES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



## **POLICY STATEMENT 5 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE THE FISHERIES MCS AND ENFORCEMENT SYSTEMS WHILE PAYING DUE ATTENTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS AIMED AT COMBATting IUU FISHING**

In general, the current level of implementation of the legislation relating to IUU fishing is inadequate. Under the current regulatory framework, major issues in relation to IUU fishing would include suspicion of illegal fishing of foreign vessels in the EEZ and low level of compliance with some technical measures including in particular minimum size of fish, in a context where MCS responsibilities mostly involve public institutions that are not under the administrative control of the Ministry responsible for fisheries.

As a priority, a National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing (NPOA-IUU) will be formulated using guidance provided by the WECAFC Regional Plan of Action on IUU (FAO 2020b), focusing on flag and coastal States responsibilities and paying due attention to the need for putting in place a strong system for MCS and enforcement with clear procedures.

### **Strategy (see statement 1 and strategy on AIS):**

- Establish a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) scheme to monitor the activities of vessels greater than 6m LOA;
- Formalise collaboration of the BFD with the Barbados Coast Guard and Marine Police and promote strategic planning of joint MCS operations;
- Promote participatory surveillance mechanisms in the EEZ by encouraging fishers to play the role of 'watchdog' and of 'whistle-blowers' while at the same time ensuring their own security;
- Promote educational campaigns and provide compliance incentives with a view to encouraging self-compliance by fishers with respects to existing regulations, with a focus on regulations aimed at preventing the use of harmful fishing gear and techniques and the catch of undersized fish.
- Increase surveillance at fish markets to preventing the sale of undersized fish.
- Provide targeted educational initiatives to inform the Barbados Coast Guard, Marine Police and the judicial system on the gravity of certain infringements with respect to sustainable fisheries and environmental preservation.

# PILLAR I: FISHERIES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

## POLICY STATEMENT 6 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Actively participate of Barbados in international and regional fisheries cooperation particularly ICCAT, CRFM and WECAFC noting that international and regional cooperation is essential for the management of shared resources, and it can play an important role in addressing national deficiencies in the provision of management services such as research and MCS.

Moreover, actively participating in regional cooperation including through increasing the attendance of Barbados at ICCAT meetings will increase the capacity of Barbados to defend its interests regarding the exploitation and management of large pelagic fisheries (including sailfish and white marlin).

### Strategy:

- Allocate funds in the operational budget to support participation of senior technical fisheries officers, accomplished spokespersons, and legal advisors at important international and regional meetings.
- Support the attendance of senior technical fisheries officers at ICCAT meetings.
- Ensure continued participation of fisheries officers and fisherfolk leaders at the annual Caribbean Fisheries Forum.
- Support the Minister's and Chief Fisheries Officer's participation at the annual CRFM Ministerial Council.
- Promote the participation of fisheries officers at Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Annual Conferences to present research and get updates of the latest technology and research being undertaken in the region.



# PILLAR I: FISHERIES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



## POLICY STATEMENT 7 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENCOURAGE INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF FISHERY STAKEHOLDERS IN DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

The FAC remains an effective governance arrangement to facilitate dialogue among the MENB, fisheries authority, resource users and other stakeholders, and to advise the Minister.

However, there is a need to improve the effectiveness and legitimacy of the overall mechanism in order to promote inter-sectoral collaboration based on specific fisheries management units and value chains.

### Strategy:

- Strengthening of the FAC mechanism through the appointment of representatives from the Barbados Coast Guard/Marine Police. Representation from the tourism, health, finance and insurance sectors, and a youth advocate can be co-opted when dealing with relevant specialised topics.
- Develop stakeholder advisory committees for specific fisheries that report to the FAC. Lessons Learnt from the attempt to establish the Sea Egg Fisheries Advisory Committee can be used to promote success.
- Support the development of specific associations preferably by fishery (e.g. Longline, Sea egg) or points along the value chain (e.g. diver or processor associations).
- Implement capacity-building initiatives to strengthen existing and newly created associations (organisational development, training in fisheries management, lobbying capacities, etc).
- Explore synergies with regional projects that are promoting the development of organisational capacity of fisherfolk organisations.

# PILLAR II: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

## POLICY STATEMENT 8 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSOLIDATE AND FORMALIZE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN INITIATIVES

In the last two decades, the BFD has promoted FMP initiatives in an effort to “develop and keep under review fisheries management and development schemes”. Species-specific FMPs have been regularly prepared and updated but most of these plans are yet to be formally adopted and their level of implementation is weak.

In addition, some of the management units that could be subject to specific FMPs still need to be clearly defined. Moreover, under the free and de facto open access regime, fishing capacities have steadily increased which has added complexity in FMP approaches. Hence the need to integrate the concepts of EAF, CCA and DRM.

### Strategy:

- Promote and adopt specific FMPs with the aim of further regulating the access to resources, adopting specific and complementary measures to the existing regulations.
- Develop collaborative arrangements (co-management) between public and private stakeholders concerned by the fishery and related value chains.
- Actively support the implementation of agreed regional FMPs adopted by competent fisheries bodies, for example with a focus on the flyingfish sub-regional FMP adopted by CRFM in 2014 and updated in 2020.
- Develop a plan for managing fishing fleet capacity with the aim of promoting a stable and viable balance between the fishing capacity of these fleets and their fishing opportunities over time. In this context, the transboundary nature of migratory stocks should be taken into consideration and as such regional fishing fleet capacity must be.



# PILLAR II: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION



## **POLICY STATEMENT 9 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL INCREASE THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR TO NATIONAL EFFORTS AIMED AT PROTECTING AND CONSERVING THE COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS**

Ecosystem health and integrity is fundamental to sustainable development. If fisheries resources and their ecosystems are well managed they can meet a broad range of economic, social and cultural aspirations.

It is evident that the ecosystems within the coastal areas of Barbados are under stress. The major threats to marine biodiversity are domestic and agrochemical pollution, sewage contamination, sedimentation, coastal development, sand mining, unsustainable fishing practices and pressure, and impacts of climate variability and change.

### **Strategy:**

- Strengthen the current regulatory framework aimed at preventing the degradation of the ecosystems and catch of undersized species with particular focus on reef fisheries and at considering the imposition of closed seasons as a another management tool for certain species such as lobsters and conchs.
- Strengthen information awareness and education campaigns to raise the awareness of fishing communities on the rationales of promoting sustainable fisheries and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems; awareness-raising is essential to engender a proper understanding and buy-in for regulations by fisherfolk.
- Encourage a strict enforcement of fisheries and environmental regulations especially in the near inshore area, in this regard, make applicable fines and other punishments for non-compliance with the measures aimed at protecting the integrity of coastal ecosystems substantial enough to have an effective deterrent effect.
- Reduce mortality of non-target, endangered and protected species (especially sea turtles) through the use of available technology like de-hooking devices which is of particular concern for the longlining fishery and could be an essential component of any eco-labelling initiative.
- Contribute to the protection of the wider marine environment through supporting worthwhile Marine Managed Areas while being further involved in their management, and support other initiatives aimed at mitigating potential environmental impact of other blue economy sectors (e.g. reduction of water pollution, solid waste management, beach and reef cleaning).
- Examine possibilities to establish mechanisms that would allow the tourism industry to contribute to the financing of field activities involving fishing communities aimed at protecting and conserving the coastal ecosystems.

# PILLAR III: SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

## POLICY STATEMENT 10 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FISHERFOLK

The adoption of sustainable development principles in managing fisheries has resulted in a focus on “triple bottom line” outcomes taking into account ecological, economic and social criteria. In this context, it is important to have a clear direction concerning social and cultural issues to help guide the evolution and modernisation of Barbados' fisheries sector. Potential social and cultural issues include the role of small scale fisheries and associated communities, decent working conditions and gender equity and equality.

Most jobs in the sector are informal. Earnings are unstable, partly because fish catches vary with seasons. In some cases, there are no social protection schemes that fisherfolk can access. In other cases, schemes exist, but fisherfolk might find it difficult to join social security schemes that require paying a monthly fee.

### Strategy:

- Facilitate the application of the existing national insurance scheme to fisherfolk to provide them with a social security net.
- Promote the implementation of innovative parametric insurance schemes designed to enhance resilience against the impacts of climate-related disasters.
- Protect the cultural heritage and access traditional knowledge of fishers through the development of social and cultural strategies to complement ecological and economic objectives.
- Incorporate equal opportunities in fisheries sector plans for men, women and youth, taking into account the differing situation and needs of these categories of human capital, including decent work and participation in decision-making.
- Develop and implement a plan of action to guide the evolution and modernisation of the fisheries sector and include specific actions aimed at achieving a better balance of environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes.



# PILLAR III: SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS



## POLICY STATEMENT 11 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

In general, fishing is considered a very dangerous occupation, and often workers must endure long working hours and poor occupational safety and health conditions. Violence, forced labour, sexual abuse and poor safety at sea can in some cases further increase the vulnerability of small-scale fisheries actors.

### Strategy:

- Equip seafarers and fisherfolk with the required skills to effect safety at sea through the provision of accredited training programmes.
- Encourage modernisation and mechanisation of fishing and related activities with a view to improve security and working conditions.
- Promote the use of new communication technology and facilitate the provision of safety equipment to fisherfolk.
- Execute necessary infrastructure upgrades in fish markets to promote the safety of actors in the post-harvest sector.
- Develop a preventative maintenance programme for fish markets and equipment (e.g. scales, tractors, tammy lifts) used for the provision of services in the sector.
- Ensure that formal and informal workers throughout the fisheries value chain, including fisheries management officials, are able to work under decent and gainful conditions.
- Further promote the implementation of annual vessel inspections to ensure compliance with safety standards.

# PILLAR III: SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

## POLICY STATEMENT 12 –THE GOVERNMENT WILL INCREASE RESILIENCE AND REDUCE VULNERABILITY OF FISHING COMMUNITIES TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISKS

Climate change and variability, along with the risks of disaster due to climate and other hydro-meteorological hazards, pose serious threats to the sustainable development of the fisheries sector including aquaculture. Regional and national initiatives on national climate policy for mitigation and adaptation are on-going and there is a need to adequately anchor the fisheries sector in such initiatives.

### Strategy:

- Develop a specific Fisheries sector adaptation strategy and action plan addressing institutional networking, investment strategies and operational innovation.
- Increase awareness and understanding of fisherfolk on climate change impacts and vulnerability in the fisheries sector.
- Encourage the emergence of micro-financing systems and innovative parametric insurance schemes adapted to small-scale fishers.
- Implement the climate and disaster aspects of the CCCFP and protocols on Securing Small Scale Fisheries; and, Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Incorporate the CRFM Model Disaster Management Plan and other approaches to addressing disaster risks from multiple natural and other hazards.
- Promote existing early warning information systems for approaching storms and hurricanes in the fisheries sector via mobile applications (e.g. CAP).
- Promote existing forecasting models and outlook bulletins for sargassum influx events and promote preparedness and management plans for fishers coping with these events.
- Mainstream DRM and CCA into all aspects of fisheries governance through ecosystem approaches and institutional arrangements such as national inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms.



# PILLAR IV: FISHERIES VALUE CHAINS



## POLICY STATEMENT 13 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR INVESTORS BY INCREASING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR

The fishing industry has often been viewed as a last resort career path. Raising the profile of the industry involves marketing different aspects of the value chain by highlighting different occupations and opportunities for expansion.

### Strategy:

- Examine the possibility of providing tax exemptions in the investments law for projects supported by local enterprises including those focusing on the greening of the fisheries sector.
- Develop partnerships with local commercial banks and credit unions to establish credit lines for responsible projects in the fisheries sector supported by local enterprises; this would include raising the awareness of financial institutions about the specificities and potential of the fisheries sector and facilitating the design of tailor-made financial programmes for fishing and related activities.
- Assist the fishing industry in subscribing to insurance schemes in the context of the existing national insurance system (only 5% of vessels are currently insured).
- Promote specific research and development work on fisheries value chains in close collaboration with entrepreneurs.
- Promote in-person and online apprenticeship and training programmes in fishing and related activities with the view of facilitating the recruitment of qualified people, contribute to a better recognition of professions linked to the fishing industry in the national economy and attract youth in various areas of the sector.
- Promote the application of digital tools and technologies at different entry points throughout the fisheries value chain.

# PILLAR IV: FISHERIES VALUE CHAINS

## POLICY STATEMENT 14 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL FACILITATE THE EMERGENCE OF NEW VALUE CHAINS THAT CAN BOOST THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL FISHING INDUSTRY AND IMPROVE TRADE BALANCE IN FISH PRODUCTS

### Strategy:

- Examine the possibility of increasing import tariffs and taxes for unregistered fish processors who import certain fish and fishery products frozen and then sell them as fresh products after having been repackaged by local companies and that can be supplied by local entrepreneurs (at least the distributors and vendors should have the obligation to specify the origin of the fish product).
- Promote strategic and commercial intelligence to support the development of value chains that can identify and meet fish demand in the country with particular focus on tourism market opportunities.
- Promote the creation of a guarantee fund (at Central Bank level) to cover the financial risk of fish trade.
- Strengthen the capacity of Barbados for international fish market access through compliance with international Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures.
- Provide documentation for trade and business facilitation in the fisheries sector in collaboration with specialized local agencies such as Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (BIDC), Enterprise Growth Fund Limited (EGFL) and Fund Access.
- Actively participate in regional initiatives aimed at promoting the harmonisation of the Caribbean trading block legislation.
- Promote specific measures aimed at facilitating the sustainable development of longline fishing and related value chains, including measures for secured access to bait and ice.
- Support initiatives aimed at developing value chains from fish waste to produce direct and indirect human consumption fish food products including fish emulsion used as fertilizer for crops, fish silage used as animal feed and fish meal as pet food or high value added products such as fish burgers, fingers and sausages made from fish discards.
- Support initiatives aimed at developing an eco-labelling of certain Barbados fishery products.



# PILLAR IV: FISHERIES VALUE CHAINS



## **POLICY STATEMENT 15 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM THAT ENSURES HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTS THROUGHOUT ALL THE CHANNELS OF FISH HARVESTING AND PROCESSING**

Proper handling of fish and other seafood products between capture and delivery to the consumer is a crucial element in assuring final product quality. Standards of sanitation, method of handling and the time/temperature of holding fish are all significant quality factors. Effective quality assurance systems are needed to increase efficiency, lower processing costs, produce high quality products and ensure customer satisfaction.

### **Strategy:**

- Promote product quality assurance through inter alia providing compulsory training for fisherfolk in fish handling, storing and processing practices in compliance with international sanitary and phytosanitary standards (CODEX GMPs, HACCP, etc.).
- Encourage joint inspection with health inspectors for the issuance of sanitary certificates at fish markets.
- Recruit additional quality control officers to be stationed at primary and secondary fish markets to ensure that standards are maintained.
- Attain sanitary and phytosanitary standards of Barbados fish products (Codex Alimentarius, CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality – CROSQ); this would notably involve improved quality of water and sanitation system and fish storage on-board vessels.
- Implement a fish product traceability system in public fish markets by employing technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence to promote transparency.
- Establish a legal framework that mandates separation of fish waste if utilized for secondary processing (for instance bony fish should be separated from shell fish and molluscs species to reduce risks of food allergies).

# PILLAR IV: FISHERIES VALUE CHAINS

## POLICY STATEMENT 16 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE THE CAPACITIES OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR TO FULLY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE POTENTIAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The functional diversification of coastal fishing communities has been a subject of recent discussion. Recent initiatives have been linked to the creation of synergies between the fishing sector and tourism. Exploring the opportunities for the development of fishing tourism requires a clear policy directive and associated strategies.

### Strategy:

- Support the sanitisation and beautification of main fish markets with a view to fully realize their potential for tourist attraction while not impeding the work of the fisherfolk; this should involve close collaboration between Tourism, Health, Maritime affairs, Blue Economy, Environment and Labour.
- Provide facilities for the development of local sea-food restaurants and of 'fresh and healthy' seafood value chains to the tourism industry market while ensuring that local fish products are mainly used or at least that consumers are made aware of the origin of the fish products (for instance restaurants should carry a 'local' or 'imported' label on their menu choices or a QR code that provides information on how the fish was caught).
- Re-examine the current legal framework to allow commercial fishing boats complying with appropriate sanitary and safety rules as well as having adequate third party insurance to take tourists on authentic fishing trips or to participate in fishing operations with 'real' fishers. This provides an opportunity to create a significant niche market to have tourists pay to be part of the crew for the day and experience commercial fishing.
- Promote the creation of a maritime museum that is integrated with a marine managed area.



# PILLAR V: RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE



## **POLICY STATEMENT 17 – THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUPPORT THE CONTRIBUTION OF SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE TO ECONOMIC GROWTH, FOOD SECURITY AND INCOME DIVERSIFICATION.**

Aquaculture in Barbados is in its infancy stage. At present there is only one commercial aquaculture operation in Barbados and an on-going project and training programme for small-scale aquaponics. Mariculture is non-existent in spite of the existence of the potential for some forms of mariculture e.g. sea moss cultivation. The main challenges faced for aquaculture include access to land and marine coastal areas, reliable and cost effective water supply and the current lack of attractiveness for private investors.

### **Strategy:**

- Identify aquaculture systems that could potentially be adapted to the Barbados socio-economic and environmental contexts and undertake a mapping of potential sites.
- Promote exchanges of experience and best practices on mariculture in the Caribbean.
- Integrate aquaculture/aquaponics into the Fisheries Division's annual training programme.
- Promote culture methods and techniques that are environmentally friendly, sustainable and ensures food safety considering production objectives such as animal size and biomass.
- Promote digital solutions for aquaculture to reduce mortality rates, increase efficiency of farm inputs such as feed and vaccines, prevent disease and lice infection and optimize farm management.
- Elaborate and adopt a specific aquaculture development policy and plan and supporting legislation, addressing in particular key factors for aquaculture development (inter alia access to land and water, seed and feed supply, enabling business climate) as well as governance aspects (i.e. respective role of public and private stakeholders in the development process).
- Further promote the expansion of aquaponic systems and provide the necessary training programmes to ensure sustainability.

# PILLAR VI: INFRASTRUCTURE

## POLICY STATEMENT 18 – THE GOVERNMENT WILL MODERNISE FISH LANDING AND MARKETING INFRASTRUCTURES AND SERVICES THROUGH PROMOTING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP)

Promoting adequate infrastructure and services is essential to allow the smooth operation of fishing vessels, increased value addition to fishery products, development of new value chains and adaptation to climate change. This makes reference to berthing, fueling, landing facilities, handling, cleaning, icing, freezing, processing, storing and marketing, in a context where the standards of fish markets have not changed in the last 20 years.

This can also facilitate the provision of key fisheries management services such as data collection. There is a crucial need to modernize landing and marketing infrastructures and services. For effectiveness and efficiency reasons, the Government will however gradually disengage with the provision of certain services and encourage the development of PPP.

### Strategy:

- Engage in a process of upgrading strategic infrastructure and services and transforming their governance, by undertaking a feasibility study and developing a specific 'Charter' containing concrete commitments and obligations of public and private stakeholders.
- Develop an investment portfolio that outlines the sharing of responsibilities for the provision of adequate infrastructures and services in support of improved and environmentally-friendly fishing operations and value chains.
- Envisage the development of dedicated fish landing sites such as sites for longliners on the basis of a close partnership between the Government (land, infrastructures, water, electricity, sanitation) and private investors (tractor/boat lifting, ice-making plant, blast-freezers, manufacturing of boxes and containers, storing facilities, fish processing unit, etc.).
- Provide dedicated area for processing and storage of farmed fish produced by commercial aquaculture operations.
- Employ renewable energy systems and technology to support infrastructure upgrades.





## IMPLEMENTATION

### Some considerations related to implementation and monitoring

The first step towards the implementation of the Fisheries Policy will be for the Government to finalise, officially adopt and ensure its publication. This should include the development of a communication strategy that guides the creation of appropriate communication products tailored to selected target audiences. Note that the previous Fisheries Policy (2012) had not been formally adopted and disseminated, which limited its impact.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation is essential for effective policy implementation and performance assessment. The implementation of this policy will be guided by an effective monitoring and evaluation system along with a feedback mechanism to identify aspects of the policy that may need to be revised.

The overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of this policy lies with the Fisheries Division and by extension the MENB. However, the Ministry will work in close collaboration with the FAC, other public institutions and the private sector to implement the policy and to monitor and evaluate its performance.

Another step towards the implementation of the Fisheries Policy involves the preparation of a detailed 3-5 year action plan that includes a participatory M&E framework. The plan will also include further specified operational objectives, indicative costing, sharing of responsibilities among public and private stakeholders and indicators. The SSF Guidelines can offer guidance in the development of the M&E framework and associated indicators.

The implementation of the policy should also guide the development of an updated FMP that features species-specific plans as appendices. It should be emphasised that any update should integrate the concepts of EAF, CCA and DRM and include gender considerations.

Finally, it will be essential to ensure that the fisheries administration is adequately empowered to support the smooth implementation of the Fisheries Policy. In this context, the Fisheries Division urgently needs to undergo a full-fledged institutional strengthening project that addresses inadequacies and provides the staffing, equipment and budget needed to advance the industry.

In conclusion, while the adoption of this policy is a significant step, full success in meeting the policy's objectives will depend upon ongoing collaboration between government agencies, fisheries stakeholders and other private sector interests.



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# APPENDIX

## International and Regional Instruments which Barbados supports:

1. **The United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), (1982):** Lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order in the world's ocean and seas establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources. It enshrines the notion that all problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be addressed as a whole.
2. **FAO Compliance Agreement, (1993):** Seeks to address the threat to international fisheries management posed by vessels that do not abide by agreed fishing rules.
3. **The UN Fish Stocks Agreement, (1995):** Ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.
4. **Ecosystem Approach to Management:** Strategy aims to consider the complex interrelations go an entire ecosystem in decision making rather than simply responding to a specific issue and challenge.
5. **The Convention on Biological Diversity (1993):** Designed to promote the conservation of biodiversity and to ensure the sustainable use and equitable sharing of genetic resources.
6. **The Cartagena Convention (1984):** Strategy for the protection and development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean region.
7. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (2016):** A universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.
8. **Aichi Biodiversity Targets (2011):** A set of 20 global targets under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 intended to help countries measure their progress in preventing the loss of biodiversity and improving benefits from biodiversity to society.
9. **FAO Port State Measures Agreement (2016):** An agreement to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing.
10. **FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) (1995):** A collection of principles, goals and elements for action, for the conservation, management and development of all fisheries.
11. **Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) Guidelines (2015):** Guidelines developed as a complement to the 1995 FAO CCRF. They address small-scale fisheries and encompass all the activities along the whole value chain undertaken by both men and women.
12. **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flor (CITIES (1992):** Designed to ensure that international trade in animals and plants does not threaten their survival (becoming endangered or extinct) in the wild.
13. **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 of UNCED (1992):** Principles intended to guide countries in future sustainable development.
14. **Codex Alimentarius Standards:** International Food standards for the protection of consumers health and to ensure fair practices in the food trade
15. **Castries Declaration on IUU Fishing (2010):** To strengthen collaboration in the fight to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU Fishing, to safe guard the benefits from the optimum utilisation of fisheries resources for both present and future generations.
16. **The Agreement establishing the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (2014):** A policy to help enhance the income, status and capacities of Caribbean Fisherfolk; thus, enabling them to sustainably provide for themselves and their families.

## International and Regional Fisheries and Maritime Management Organisations

**The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT):** An intergovernmental organisation responsible for the management and conservation of tuna and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas.

**International Maritime Organisation (IMO):** UN Agency responsible for the safety of life at seas, maritime security and the protection of the marine environment and preventing pollution of sea caused by ships.

**Codex Alimentarius Commission (CODEX):** Joint FAO/WHO international Food Standards Body whose purpose is to protect the health of consumers and to ensure fair practices in the food trade.

**The FAO Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):** an international fisheries body for the wider Caribbean. The objective is to promote the effective conservation, management, and development of the living marine resources of the area of competence of the commission, in accordance with the FAO CCRF and address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the commission.

**The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM):** CARICOM fisheries body. An intergovernmental organisation 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".

