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Reduction of Environmental Impact from Tropical Shrimp Trawling, through the introduction of By-catch
Reduction Technologies and Change of Management
(EP/GLO/201/GEF)

Trinidad and Tobago

**Progress report to the Project Coordinator
EP/GLO/201/GEF**

January-June 2005

By Suzuette Soomai



Progress Report to the Project Coordinator EP/GLO/201/GEF

Country: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Reporting period (JANUARY – JUNE 2005)

Reporting Officer = National Coordinator (name /title): Suzuette Soomai (Fisheries Officer)

1. Meetings of the National Steering Committee held:

There was one meeting of the National Steering Committee held on 24 March 2005. The meeting focused on a review and an update on the progress of data collection activities under the project. Apart from this, illegal trade issues affecting shrimp fishers were of major concern to the fishermen in attendance and most of the discussions were based on this. The minutes are not attached since they contain a great deal of information that is considered sensitive in nature and not related to Project EP/GLO/201/GEF. The meeting agenda is however attached in Annex 1.

2. Progress of each activity (as listed in the project document, section 4.5 General Workplan and Timetable)

See Item 4

3. Workshops, training, and demonstration activities.

There were no such national activities over the period in review.

4. Progress of each national project activity (as scheduled under the LOA with FAO).

(a) Develop Awareness Material & Consultative Process with Fishing Industry

Public Awareness and Consultation

1. In April 2005, a stakeholder meeting was hosted by the Fisheries Division. This stakeholder meeting came at the end of a two-week technical workshop which followed on previous joint fisheries research efforts between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela which have been facilitated and supported both technically and financially by the FAO under the auspices of the FAO/WECAFC *ad hoc* Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish Resources of the Brazil-Guianas Continental Shelf. The Secretary of WECAFC served as facilitator for the meeting.

The meeting comprised members of the fishing industry operating in the Gulf of Paria trawler owners and gillnet operators and members of the National Steering Committee for Project EP/GLO/201/GEF. The agenda items included presentations on the assessments conducted on status of the shrimp and groundfish stocks shared by Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, and the management actions required to maintain a sustainable level of fishing effort. A draft report of the stakeholder meeting has been prepared in association with the FAO.

2. Information transfer and periodic updates on the progress of project activities were made during the weekly field sampling trips to trawl landing sites (*referred to in the section below*).

(b) Data Collection on Landings & Fishing Grounds

At sea data collection:

From January to June 2005, there were monthly purchases of hauls from each trawl fleet to determine species composition of catch including discards. One at-sea trip was conducted on board an industrial vessel operating in the Columbus Channel, three trips were conducted on semi-industrial vessels operating out of Orange Valley in the north Gulf of Paria, and two artisanal vessels operating out of Otaheite in the south Gulf of Paria. A Biological Data Collector was responsible for the collection and purchase of the sample of the catch, including discards, while at sea, on board the commercial trawlers and recorded general station data and GPS coordinates of fishing area. Species composition of by-catch by fleet was obtained and data computerised. Length and weight by species was recorded and where possible, the stage of maturity.

Existing Biological Data Collectors on the permanent establishment of the Fisheries Division are being utilised to collect catch samples at sea in lieu of an Observer Programme. These individuals are present onboard the fishing vessel for the duration of the trip in the case of the artisanal and semi-industrial vessels and for one fishing day of the trip in the case of the industrial vessel.

Land-based sampling of artisanal, semi-industrial trawlers and industrial trawlers:

A total of 29 field trips to the fish markets at Orange Valley and 9 trips to Otaheite were conducted over the period. The following activities were covered on these trips:

Biological sampling programme for two species of finfish by-catch, *Micropogonias furnieri* (Whitemouth croaker) and *Lutjanus synagris* (Lane snapper) where length frequencies and weights were recorded.

Sorting of landed by-catch in the market to be able to determine the species composition by fleet. The output from this activity will assist with refining current estimates of total landings by species and fleet. These new estimates will assist in data preparation for analysis since the catch and effort data is currently recorded at fish landing sites both at the species level and in broadly sorted categories where several groundfish species are combined.

These trips also served as informal meetings with vessel owners and crew and allowed for periodic updates on the progress of the project and exchange of information regarding fishing operations.

Study on the Socio-economic Importance of By-catch in the Demersal Trawl Fishery for Shrimp:

The Fisheries Division does not have the capability, in terms of researchers, to conduct socio-economic analyses. The Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension of the St. Augustine, Trinidad campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), was identified as the only local institution with the technical capability as well as experience to conduct a study on the socio-economic importance of by-catch in the trawl fishery. The study will be conducted by a team comprising Dr Ranjit Singh (Head of Department), Dr Lloyd Rankine (Senior Lecturer), Dr Hutchinson (Lecturer), Mr. Seepersad (Postgraduate).

The Terms of Reference for this study was prepared by the Fisheries Division and a study proposal has been prepared by the study team (attached as Annex 2 & 3 respectively).

Weekly meetings were held with the team in June 2005 in which the TOR was reviewed, and the study proposal was developed. Site visits to Orange Valley and Otaheite were also conducted and members of the study team were introduced to members of the National Steering Committee at their respective landing sites.

(c) Co-ordination of Activities at the Bilateral and Regional Level

Compilation of information necessary for the preparations for gear trials to be conducted later in 2005 was initiated. Specifications of current trawl gear were recorded for each fleet in order to be reviewed and to inform discussions with Mexico's gear technologists regarding details and schedule of gear trials at the Global Meeting of National Co-ordinators in July 2005.

5. General comments on the current status of the shrimp-trawling industry.

The composition of the trawl fleet remained unchanged from that recorded in December 2003. The trawl fleet comprises 126 vessels of which 95 are artisanal (41 with inboard and 54 with outboard engines), 9 semi-industrial and 22 industrial vessels.

6. Financial inputs (in-kind)

Government (in-kind):

Professional staff:

One (1) Fisheries Officer for 6 months @ US\$1000/month with an estimated 40% full-time allocated to project activities: \$2,400

One (1) Fisheries Officer for 6 months @ US\$1000/month with an estimated 10% full-time allocated to project activities: \$600

Support Staff:

One (1) Fisheries Assistant for 6 months @ US\$500/month with an estimated 50% full-time allocated to project activities: \$1,500

Two (2) Biological Data Collectors for 6 months @ US\$500/month with an estimated 75% full-time allocated to project activities: \$4,500

Travel expenses: \$500

(includes vehicle maintenance and fuel)

Materials and supplies: \$2,000

Includes by-catch samples and ice; field equipment (sampling and safety gear)

Local Consultancy fees:

Contract for conducting study on the social and economic importance of by-catch: \$ 2,421
(The overall cost of the consultancy is \$ 5,161. The study team received \$740 from the country funds received by FAO to cover the cost of fuel and related expenses in the conduct of field work. The team will be paid the balance of \$2,000 on receipt of funds from FAO on submission of the finalized report.)

Sub-Total: US\$13,921

Industry (in-kind):

Attendance by trawler owners at the stakeholder workshop in April 2005:

Two (2) representatives of the artisanal fleet and one (1) representative from the industrial fleet: \$600

Attendance by trawler owners at the National Steering Committee Meeting in March 2005:
(using a daily rate, based on revenues, of US\$490 for the industrial vessel owner and US\$110 per hour for the artisanal fisherman)

Sub-Total: US\$600

Overall total: US\$14,521

7. Estimation of by-catch reduction:

Number of shrimp trawlers: 126 vessels

Number of shrimp-trawlers currently using BRDs: (expand by major-type of shrimp-trawler (if possible)): 9 Semi-industrial and 22 industrial shrimp trawlers outfitted with TEDs.

8. List any equipment purchased, with indication of price and present location of the item(s).

Not applicable