

Costa Rica to tackle pelagic fishery sustainability

The formation of a new fishery improvement project (FIP), focusing on tuna, swordfish, and mahi fishing in Costa Rica, has been announced today.

In Costa Rica, tuna and related species represent more than 60 percent of the catches within a fishing sector that in 2012 provided around 7200 jobs nationally, with 23 percent in harvesting, 72 percent in processing, and 6 percent in distribution of seafood products.

The FIP is being developed within the framework of the National Platform for Sustainable Large Pelagics Fisheries. The platform is driven by all relevant stakeholders involved in the fishery, enabled by the United Nations Development Programme, and guided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Costa Rican Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture and the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

Costa Rica's National Chamber of Exporters of Fishing and Aquaculture Products and the National Federation of Fisheries Organizations are highly committed to the development of the FIP, and are already working to publicise ongoing improvements.

"This FIP represents a comprehensive effort in which all stakeholders in country and engaged companies in the supply chain are getting together in an innovative way to advance the sustainability of large pelagics fisheries in the country," said Enrique Alonso, Latin America Fishery Coordinator for the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP).

"Currently, there are no certified fisheries and no active fishery improvement projects in the country. Most large pelagics are for the export market, with 95 percent of mahi going to the US, so the aim of this FIP is to fulfill the demand of sustainable products while contributing to the fulfillment of 2030 Sustainable Development Goals," said Mauricio Gonzalez, Director of the of National Federation of Fisheries Organizations.

Washington-based seafood buyer Chefs Trading is the FIP's principal financial backer, using a funding model supported by a number of other stakeholders operating in the country, including Seattle Fish Co and Trinity Seafood.

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