



# COUNTRY FACTSHEET

## Costa Rica Fisheries

### SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES CATCHES MOMENTUM

The overexploitation of marine fisheries is a major global issue and a key driver of changes in the marine environment. A variety of related factors are behind this, including our growing global appetite for seafood.

With 3.5% of the world's marine biodiversity and a valuable long-line industry for fishing large pelagics, such as tuna and mahi-mahi, Costa Rica is one of the countries facing the difficult challenge of balancing pressing conservation needs with the further development of a vital economic sector.

In recent years, the industry has been burdened by out-dated technology, poor access to markets, illegal fishing and weak government capacity for fisheries management, research, monitoring, control and surveillance, as well as a lack of constructive dialogue. With the demand for large pelagics from Costa Rican waters expected to only increase, sustainable seafood strategies are urgently needed. Developing these will require an agreed vision and plan of action among key stakeholders and effective coordination across the sector.



### FAST FACTS

#### Marine Commodity Production in Costa Rica

- Costa Rica contains approximately 3.5 % of the world marine biodiversity and is part of the Great Marine Ecosystem of the Central American Pacific and of the East Tropical Pacific Scenery, together with Panama, Colombia, and Ecuador.
- According to FAO, the main marine commodities are tuna (60.5% of the catch in 2009) and white fish (37.8% of the catch in 2009).
- Some 16,000 people are directly involved in the long-line and large pelagics industries as well as thousands more who work along the supply chain.

## ABOUT THE UNDP GREEN COMMODITIES PROGRAMME

We work in 11 countries to address sustainability issues, including deforestation, across seven highly-traded agricultural and marine commodities. We do this by supporting governments to lead multi-stakeholder dialogues, devise national action plans and leverage resources to address

the structural barriers to sustainable commodities. We also act as a bridge for collaboration between the public and private sectors, civil society and donors. Through these partnerships, innovative solutions can be identified, piloted and implemented on a scale that makes a difference.

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Green  
Commodities  
Programme

*“For us, this dialogue is an opportunity to show our commitment to responsible fishing, and the sector’s willingness to join national initiatives, allowing us to take our products to new sustainable markets” - Mauricio González, Executive Director of the National Long-line Fishing sector, Costa Rica.*



## Our Partners

### **Government:**

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock;  
Costa Rican Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture; Ministry of Environment and Energy.

### **Non-government and civil society:**

Costa Rica National Chamber of Fisheries Exporters; Monterey Bay Aquarium; Sustainable Fisheries Partnership.

### **Private Sector:**

Chef Trading; sport fishing operators; long-line operators; restaurant operators.

### **Donors:**

The Global Environment Facility

*“This country must reach a balance between environment, economics and the social factors. The Government considers it of utmost urgency that these forums are opened so that the situation can be assessed from the perspective of every stakeholder, and based on this we can move collectively toward well-managed fisheries, with a vision of sustainable production.” – Former Minister of Agriculture, Luis Felipe Arauz Cavallini.*

## The UNDP Green Commodities Approach

In 2016, we supported the Government to develop and launch the country’s first [National Platform for Sustainable Fisheries of Large Pelagics](#). Led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, together with the Costa Rican Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture and the Ministry of Environment and Energy, this Platform provides a neutral space where stakeholders from across the industry can discuss the challenges they face. Representatives involved with long-line fishing, sport fishing, export, trade, restaurants, national and international retail, government, academia, non-governmental organizations are participating in the government-led dialogue. The ultimate goal is to

- **Elaborating a National Action Plan for Large Pelagic Fishery** that would contribute to future investment and better coordination. Four working groups have now been set-up to proposed priority actions. Activities being explored include the use of precision fishing, developing responsible markets, protocols for reporting illegal fishing, and changing fishing practices to mitigate the impact on vital ecosystems.
- **Developing the fishery improvement projects (FIPs)** on best practice for large pelagic fisheries and other forms of fishery certification.
- **Supporting the increased demand for sustainable marine products** within and outside of Costa Rica.
- **Positioning Costa Rica** as a country committed to sustainable use of marine resources.

### **Part of a Global Effort**

This initiative is part of the [Global Sustainable Supply Chains for Marine Commodities project](#), which includes four countries: Vietnam, the Philippines, Ecuador and Costa Rica.