

**-Final Report-**

**Workshop on Capacity Building for the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines  
for Small-Scale Fisheries and the Participation and Influence of the Sector in the  
Context of International Policies for the Conservation and Sustainable use of the  
Oceans**



November 17–21, 2025

San José, Costa Rica

Report prepared by: CoopeSoliDar R.L





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**Cooperativa Autogestionaria de Servicios Profesionales para la Solidaridad Social**

<https://coopesolidar.org/>

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## List of Abbreviations

CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity

COFI – Sub – Committee on Fisheries Management

COP – Conference of the Parties

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

ICCA - Consortium of Territories of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

SSF – Small Scale Fisheries

ULAPA - Latin American Union of Artisanal Fishermen

WFF - World Forum of Fisher Workers

WFFP - World Forum of Fisher Peoples

## Executive Summary

The workshop gathered small-scale fishers, women, youth, and community leaders from Costa Rica and Mesoamerica to strengthen the work towards the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for the sustainability of small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication, the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity and also the climate change framework. Discussions concerning national regulatory policies in relation to small scale fisheries occurred. Through presentations, group discussions, a field visit to CENADA, and direct dialogue with Congress representatives interested in the sector, participants exchanged experiences, analyzed challenges, and advanced collective strategies for defending marine territories of life in Costa Rica.

During the three days of discussion, a diversity of subjects was considered:

***A human right-based approach in marine conservation and coastal development:*** Participants emphasized that small-scale fisheries must be recognized as a way of life rooted in rights, culture, and traditional knowledge. Policies should ensure equitable access to marine territories, marine tenure and shared governance.

***Global political processes:*** The group reflected on the importance of engaging in international meetings in the process of defending this human rights-based approach. Discussions on how to highlight local struggles and build alliances concerning the III SSF Summit, COFI-FAO, the next CBD COP, the climate negotiations, to highlight local struggles and build alliances happened. Small scale fishers participating previously at international meetings mentioned that these spaces and, in some cases, the international instruments, strengthen territorial advocacy.

***Biodiversity, conservation, and climate change:*** Communities reported that climate change is shifting fishing grounds characteristics and species availability. They raised concerns about protected areas implemented without free, prior, and informed consent, as well as the impacts of tourism and gentrification in their marine territories of life.

***Governance and national legislation:*** There were strong consensus on the urgency of passing Bill 24.626 to secure rights, stabilize access to marine space, and formalize the 12 Paddle Model in Costa Rica. The workshop created important momentum through dialogue with congressional representatives interested in the sector opinion and situation.

***Value chains and markets:*** The CENADA visit revealed unequal prices, sale of vulnerable and endangered species, and barriers to formalization. Participants called for fair pricing within the Network and improved traceability.

Small scale fishers participating in the workshop mentioned as the main key takeaways of the gathering the following:

- Increased clarity on the SSF Guidelines, climate and biodiversity frameworks, and national policy tools.
- Strengthened confidence to advocate for rights, especially after meeting with Congress representatives.
- Renewed alliances across territories and with regional/global organizations.
- Greater understanding of climate change impacts and the pressures of tourism and gentrification.
- Motivation to deepen youth and women’s leadership.

Fisherfolks participants also mentioned some priority actions for follow up:

**Capacity-strengthening:** They mentioned the need for more training on SSF Guidelines, human rights, climate change, and leadership, plus additional field exchanges.

**Political advocacy:** Continue supporting Bill 24.626 and prepare for participation in the SSF Summit, COFI, and CBD COP to happen during 2026.

**Strengthening the Network:** Support the new coordination team, reactivate community visits, maintain communication channels, and establish a solidarity fund.

**Sustainable value chains:** Advance fair price agreements and strengthen responsible fishing certification and promote community markets.

**Climate adaptation and territorial defense:** Develop community-driven adaptation strategies and ensure conservation measures respect free, prior, and informed consent.

## **Introduction**

Small-scale fishing requires national and regional recognition as an important sector for ocean conservation and equitable coastal development. It is important to comply with existing instruments and regulations in favor of this sector, but above all, to strengthen the organizational and political advocacy base in the fulfillment of a human rights-based approach within a framework of equity, justice, and food security.

## **General objective of the workshop**

To strengthen knowledge about the advances and challenges for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainability of Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication in the national, regional, and international context; learning about and reflecting on specific experiences that take up a human rights approach on marine conservation.

## **Specific objectives**

Continue to build strategic alliances that strengthen the capacities of small-scale fishing rights holders in Costa Rica and the region to discuss the struggles and demands in the defense of their marine territories of life and the improvement of conditions for those who make small-scale fishing a way of life.

Identify mechanisms, spaces, and joint strategies that continue to position the Voluntary Guidelines as an instrument that should be implemented at the national, regional, and international levels.

Communicate at different public and private levels, the importance and contribution of small-scale artisanal fishing to food security and cultural identity within others, in contexts of change and threats to this key sector in the social, economic, and environmental development strategies.

Provide a space for the Network of Marine Responsible Fishing Areas and Marine Life Territories to evaluate its annual work plan and lessons learned during 2025; and work collectively its programming and 2026 annual work plan.

## DAY 1 - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18 – 2025

### Welcome Address

Remarks by Jesús Chaves – Coordinator, Network of Marine Responsible Fishing Areas and Marine Territories of Life: "It is a pleasure to see you again and to see new faces. The Network is an organization dedicated to the work with small scale fishing communities. The Network is strengthened by community leaders. We know that the small-scale fishing sector has experienced many historical injustices: no access to territory, no access to marine space, and others. However, the only way to overcome these injustices is by standing together. I am convinced that we can move forward. We have achieved many benefits for the sector. I invite you to work in these three days of workshop in the utmost harmony, with good ideas prevailing and for the benefit of the common good."

Words from Vivienne Solís – I am currently representing the International Collective in Support of Small-Scale Fishers also; I am a member of the technical team at CoopeSoliDar R.L: " ICSF has been working around the world for some time now. Today it comes to our territory. Today it turns its eyes to Mesoamerica; what is happening at this moment is very important. ICSF opens this opportunity to discuss and reflect about small-scale fisherfolks in Costa Rica. We are very happy to see honest and good people from the small-scale fishing sector. This effort should strengthen us, and hopefully this space will help us for the future challenges of the sector. It is a workshop for you, small-scale fisherfolks."

Words from Ivannia Ayales – President of CoopeSoliDar R.L: "We have a full house. Friends who haven't seen each other in a long time are here again today. There are also many new young people. Every opportunity to meet should be appreciated and offer a space for giving and receiving. You fisherfolks give your time and knowledge. Meanwhile, we organizations accompany and have a mandate to facilitate these spaces. In this workshop, we will focus on the SSF Guidelines. We still have a long way to go to achieve full recognition of rights. In this regard, capacity building, information, and communication are key to making an impact."

Ivannia gives the floor to Cassidy Abraham, a young shrimp peeler from Barra del Colorado, to discuss important ethical norms to behave during these three days of the workshop.

Cassidy Abraham: "I hope we all have good energy. The rules should be simple: for example: let's show empathy, solidarity, and respect for the other people participating in this workshop."

Vivienne Solís: "We are in a political moment in Costa Rica, in February we will all vote for a new presidency for the country. It is important to consider that this workshop is not political. If anyone starts talking about politics, remember that we are not here to focus on that discussion. We also ask you to remember that each of the participants represents many people in their communities. We have prepared some white flags, and if the discussion becomes 'political,' we suggest waving them to remind everyone of the purpose for which we have gathered here.



**Ivannia Ayales Cruz, Vivienne Solis Rivera and Jesús Chaves Vidaurre: Main table giving the welcome address.**

A presentation is made of the program, and the materials prepare for the workshop.

We remind the participants that the workshop will focus on two subjects: the voluntary guidelines for the sustainability of small-scale fishing in the context of food security and poverty eradication which clearly states the need for a human rights approach to small scale fishing; and the discussion of international issues of interest to the SSF sector.

We also remind participants of the importance to understand why we are talking specifically about small-scale fishing and also on the importance of strengthening alliances and learning together.

### **Introduction of participants:**

María Fernández – Boruca Indigenous Territory “I represent the women who use the “murice” shell (coastal mollusk) on the southern coast of the country for our traditional crafts”

Edwin Ramírez – South Caribbean, Limón “I represent the Limón Fishermen’s Association. We fish there in the traditional way. It is important to share that lobster fishing is almost disappearing. Now it is more of an unpleasant type of fishing (due to white fishing or drug trafficking), and we only have support for sport fishing and tourist fishing. We are the ones that take care of the coasts. In Limón, there is not much young population fishing in our area. Ee are all elders, people in their 70’s are forced to fish.”

Donald Villarreal – Puntarenas: “I represent the Association of Marinos de San Luis. We have 200 members, but our organization has declined somewhat. Our fishing is coming to an end. Eighty percent of our fishermen are elders. With so much persecution from the authorities, today we go out fishing and tomorrow there is a buoy warning us that fishing is prohibited in that area. What you are going through, we are all going through.”

Alex Vílchez – South Caribbean, Puerto Viejo, Manzanillo: “There are only about 30 small scale fishermen over there, where I come from.”

Davis Solano – Southern Caribbean, Puerto Viejo, Manzanillo: “I am from San José, but I have been in the Caribbean for 20 years now. Where did the idea that there are no young people fishing comes from? People fishing, barely earn enough to live. We are in Manzanillo, in Gandoca. We have problems with INCOPECA. MINAE tells us one thing and the Coast Guard tells us another. Manzanillo is very touristic area, with sport fishing, diving tours, etc. There isn't that much competition yet.”

Daniel Solórzano - San Juanillo, Guanacaste: "I belong to the San Juanillo Fishermen's Association. We fish for spotted snapper, toothy snapper, splittail or broomtail, and conger eel."

Ana Sabeth Muñoz – San Juanillo, Guanacaste: "I am a woman who fishes with a line in San Juanillo."

Vicente Rojas - El Jobo. North Pacific, Guanacaste: "I represent ASOPAR."

Kembly Mora - El Jobo. North Pacific, Guanacaste: "I am also part of ASOPAR. There, 80% of the activities are not just fishing. Today, many hotels have closed, and because of this, everyone has returned to the sea to fish, especially the young people. We catch octopus and lobster. I come from a fishing family; we are fishermen, fighters. We live in Bahía Santa Elena, and in 2008 I founded a women's association. Some people say you can't make a living from fishing, but it works."

Rosa Sandoval – El Salvador, representative of the World Fisheries Forum (WFF): "I have really enjoyed talking to you and I am going to learn a lot from you. I am the president of the largest fishermen's federation in El Salvador, which has approximately 2,000 members."

Pamela Méndez – Dominicalito Marine Responsible Fishing Area: "Right now, our community has undergone major changes due to the purchase of land by foreigners. We have people who have been removed from their land because of a project that is 70% foreign-owned and where they sell houses that currently cost at least \$300,000."

Sonia Medina – Representative of the Latin American Union of Artisanal Fishermen and president of the Local Fishermen's Association of Florida Isla Venado, Puntarenas: "I have been a member of ULAPA for three years and am participating here on their behalf."

Abraham Álvarez – Boruca Indigenous Territory: "I am from Boruca and I am young, and we are here representing the Boruca Indigenous Territory, where we also fish and use the resources of the sea for our ancestral practices."

Jennifer Torres – Isla Caballo Marine Responsible Fishing Area: "I am the secretary of the Isla Caballo fishermen's association, which has 69 members. All the inhabitants of the island are fishermen, and we currently have three research licenses issued by INCOPECA."

Ashlin Rojas – Isla Caballo Marine Responsible Fishing Area: "I am the president of the island's Fishermen's Association. Right now, we have approximately 30 young fishermen."

Brayan Fernández – Puerto Cortés, South Pacific: “I am a fisherman and shellfish gatherer. I have a shellfish license and am currently trying to obtain a fishing license as well.”

Rufina Gómez - Puerto Cortés, South Pacific: "We are part of the Térraba Sierpe Management Area, we are fighting and working for our permits. Shellfish gatherers have been severely persecuted.

Miguel Briceño – Cabuya, Central Pacific: “I am a representative of the Cabuya fishermen’s association.”

Emmanuel Rodríguez - Cabuya, Central Pacific: "I have been fishing since I was 12 years old and am very happy to be here sharing with all of you."

Joseph Álvarez – Costa Pájaros, Central Pacific: "We came to learn and meet more people."

Ezequiel Álvarez - Costa Pájaros, Central Pacific: "We have approximately 56 members. These spaces are important for continuing to move forward."

Cassidy Abraham – Barra del Colorado Marine Responsible Fishing Area: “I am a member of the shrimp peelers’ association and I peel a tiny shrimp, similar to the titi, but we call it ‘barreño shrimp.’”

Jesús Chaves – Barra del Colorado Marine Responsible Fishing Area: “I am president of the men’s fishermen’s association in Barra and co-coordinator of the Network here in Costa Rica, and we are also representing the ICCA Consortium.”

Carlos Martínez – Barra del Colorado Marine Responsible Fishing Area: “I am part of the Barra fishermen’s association. They put a wildlife refuge in our community and a national park on the other side. I am also part of Mesa Caribe, which is a very open organization that fights for community rights.”

Tatiana Martínez – Barra del Colorado Marine Responsible Fishing Area: "We are fishermen, and I am also part of Mesa Caribe."

Josué Martínez – Barra del Colorado Marine Responsible Fishing Area: “I am a shrimp fisherman.”





**Vivienne Solís Rivera facilitate the presentation of the international context.**

### **Session 1: Presentation of the international context. The Global Biodiversity Framework, and other agreements and initiatives that address environmental issues of interest to small-scale fishing**

*Vivienne Solís Rivera: (see presentation attached below)*

We must respect the diversity of rights holders. Conservation and development have taken away certain rights, for example, the state took away the rights of artisanal fishers to go out to the sea to fish, also it has taken out tenure rights. It takes away access to the sea since today, SSF require a license that cannot be provided by the State.

We are very all very different, there are many types of fishing, and all of them must be recognized. When trawling was banned in the Pacific, the Caribbean SSF were also affected even though their fishery was proven to be sustainable. What works for some of us does not necessarily works for everyone. What happens if I start fighting for my small-scale fishing with other forms of small-scale fishing? No one wins there. We must not allow fishing to be divided. We must recognize it as a way of life.

Edwin Ramírez: "The laws for the Pacific should not be the same as those for the Caribbean. Our marine system is very different."

Jesús Chaves: "The natural bans in the Caribbean, for example, are natural and very long. It's not like the lobster closure, which is regional and, in some places the lobster has not been studied."

Davis Solano: "People who have no knowledge of fishing make the laws. In Manzanillo, they set up a biological corridor and sold us the idea that the communities would have benefits, but that was a lie."

Donald Villarreal: "That's the result of the 30x30 Target."

Vivienne Solís Rivera: "The purpose of this presentation is to keep you informed. What is happening at the international level? Small-scale fishers from indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, and local communities are at the center of the debate. But we must be careful about which organizations we work with and be clear about whether they are really seeking to benefit you. We also have to be careful about the space we are in. The network has to think about which meetings it wants to participate next year, probably meetings that are binding and of interest to the objectives of the network."

**FIGURA 1**  
**UN COMPLEJO PANORAMA INTERNACIONAL, CON ESCAZAS OPORTUNIDADES A LOS REPRESENTANTES DE PESCA DE PEQUEÑA ESCALA**



Fuente: CoopeSolDar R.L, 2024 - elaboración propia

**Illustrative figure projected during part of the presentation.**

Non-binding meetings: FAO: Guidelines - UNESCO: Decade of the Oceans.

Binding meetings: FAO: COFI – Declarations such as Convention 169 – Convention on Biological Diversity – SDG 14.

Fisherfolk have produced important documents such as the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines, Call to Action, and Rules of Conduct.

Vivienne explains that although the documents produced by small-scale fishers are not binding, they nevertheless carry weight because they represent the direct opinions of fisherfolks and the realities of their communities.

“We must restore justice; we all must have the same rights. We need to give a name to a human rights base approach; we have to start calling it what it is. Defend small-scale fishing from larger industries for example.”

**Summary of the presentation:** We are not alone. We have the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines, the Call to Action, the Rules of Conduct.: Nothing about us without us, always respect, never undermine. The right to our voice; working with us means funding us.

Davis Solano: "An organization came to my community with the intention of doing a project, and they held a meeting, and just with that meeting and our attendance, that was enough for them, as if they had consulted us."

Carlos Martínez: "We have to train our people so that they know the value of international agreements and how we can apply them at the local level. We should follow up in each region and community to see if we are understanding and applying them."

Vivienne: "Marine conservation needs to respect agreements: free, prior, and informed consent—inclusion and equity in land use management efforts and action plans—application of the SSF Guidelines and Call to Action and Rules of Conduct.

It is not just a matter of rights; it is about collective care for the land, defense of identity, and cultural relations. It depends on our communities and decisions. Communities have lost their sense of support, each person looking out for themselves. We need to take action to support our organizations collectively."

What work do we have to do in five years?

- Recognition of sovereignty in all marine territories of life is necessary.
- Formalization of all artisanal fishers working in their fishing territories.
- Recognition of shared governance and co-management of small-scale fishing territories.

- NO more marine protected areas without prior, free, informed, clear, and transparent consent.
- Support for the defense of marine territories as part of 30 x 30, respecting a human rights approach to conservation.

Davis Solano: "Small scale fishing is seen as a threat, but if I do other activities such as sport fishing, the Coast Guard lets me pass."

María Carrillo: "Now there is an INCOPECA form where you have to report every day what you catch, and if you don't catch anything, you have to report that too."

Marvin Fonseca: "The Network has experienced leaders. They must demand the presence of their authorities in their territories. We must be careful about the faces they show us; firm agreements must be made."

Rufina Gómez: "We had scientific permits, but they made excuses and, in the end, only gave us four permits for four people. The situation has become very complicated and people want to work, but there are no fishing permits."

Sonia Medina: "Tourism must be regulated. I have seen tourists carrying three coolers full of fish. And that cannot be allowed. Tourists are taking away our livelihood."

Rufina Gómez: "The license allows us to catch five fish, and we have to consider whether that is really enough to survive."

Jesús Chaves: "Sport fishing can take five fish. But small-scale commercial fishing is regulated by license and has limits. And there is another type of fishing, which is subsistence fishing, which is a right under the current law."

Carlos Martínez: "In Barra del Colorado, there are plans to implement a Management Plan in the Marine Protected Area, which limits community members to fish four fish. We have already warned people not to sign. The document states that the Management Plan is accepted in the fine print that no one reads. A meeting was requested with the director of SINAC, and it was proposed that the Management Plan will be approved, despite resistance from fisherfolks."

Vivienne summarizes: "There is a framework in the international context, and we must be prepared. International agreements have the right narrative. We must demand respect for a human rights-based approach; marine responsible fishing areas are an interesting option that is available in Costa Rica. We must support the work of organizations such as ULAPA. The important thing is to be clear that we must strengthen the capacities of small-

scale fishes. We must be informed and know that we have rights and what does that means."

Jesús Chaves: "They are displacing and eliminating us. At the international level, we see how small-scale fishermen have been eliminated in other parts as Europe. That is what they are aiming for in Costa Rica. That is called the blue economy in action."

## Session 2: Stations for Discussion of Important Issues.

### Group #1: Biodiversity, Conservation, and Climate Change

This group emphasized the usefulness, significance, and dissemination of information in international forums and its link to the local level. The discussion was guided by three important questions and facilitated by Vivienne Solís Rivera. The questions were:

- What does Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (or Target 30 x30) mean? Who has heard of this issue and what have we heard?
- Have we heard of OMECs? Other means of area-based conservation? What happens if marine responsible fishing areas or under shared governance become OMECs in Costa Rica?
- What can we say about climate change in our territories? Do we know about the COP in Belem, Brazil? What do we know?

The discussion was open, with fishermen and fisherwomen asking to speak to express their opinions on the different topics. Here are their contributions:

"Climate change is changing our marine fishing territories. Marine Responsible Fishing Areas are no longer sufficient; we fishermen must go outside them to fish. These areas should be strengthened and made larger in Costa Rica".

"The Ministry of the Environment comes to our communities and territories with projects on waste, restoration and reforestation, and reducing fumigation and burning. These are all outside projects; they do not ask about our needs".

"The COP in Brazil is a political event. We now have more knowledge; we know that money is raised at these meetings and that climate change is now also a business".

“In our case, we have not been given any information about mitigation or adaptation to climate change”.

“The issue has become a business, there are many resources, but they do not prepare us for these changes, yet people earn money. Now the plastic pollution programs are a priority, but we are not to blame for the plastic in the San Juan River and we must clean it up. The same thing happens in Tárcoles, but since those who produce the pollution don't clean it up... On the issue of climate change, as well as biodiversity, the big countries keep the money”.

“The institutions in charge of this have not reached the communities. They have not reached where we are. Now the fish are not nearby; we must go far away, which is what we do in Isla Venado. Recovery of the Marine Responsible Fishing Areas is required. We have about 30 young people who got involved in this and have started to build artificial reefs. They have been working for three months and we support them; we are involved in mangrove conservation. The corvina and shrimp come from the mangroves. We plant mangroves and clean up everything that comes from elsewhere. No one has supported us; we fishermen do it ourselves”.

“No one helps us”.

“I went to a climate change workshop and it was more of the same. People talk about climate change, but the truth is that we often know more than biologists. We deal with the problem every day. There are biologists who come to my community and say that there are no mollusks, that we have to protect them. And I think, it's not that more protection is needed, if you let the tide dry up, you'll see that the mollusk population is fine. There are differences between winter and summer”.

“It's simple. What's going on? We work on climate change. We have to raise awareness, work in schools and colleges to learn, to do things differently. We have to find solutions, but children have to learn from an early age. For example, they must learn not to throw trash into the sea”.

“We need to learn about new issues and concepts. For example, we need to know what OMECs are, bring the issue to the table, understand what it is about and discuss it” .

“In my community, we are vegan environmentalists. We were given a donation of 500 trees, which were planted on the islands”.

“We have the SSF guidelines, and we must share the information”.

“We started a project with the Network to provide information about what a responsible marine fishing area is, information that everyone needs, and we have seen this at the international level. We have represented the sector, and where there is a lot of political talk, that is where we come in, according to the reality of the situation. Policies benefit the big players”.

Cabuya comments on the experience of small-scale fishermen participating in the Local Conservation Area Council (COLAC), with Manolo de Cabuya representing the fishermen. “Other sectors are participating, such as the development association, the women's group, and another group called Asada. However, INCOPECA has no interest whatsoever. It's difficult, with the tourism sector on top of that, the marina coming in, and no way to win. We are the minority. They set rules for fishing tuna. They are forcing us to be cleaner, so that you can't see a single fish bone. It's impossible to comply with all the rules they want to impose on us”.

“In El Jobo, different generations have made their living from fishing. Ten years ago, the 450-room Dreams Las Mareas hotel arrived, and that had a strong impact on our community. Before, hundreds of turtles came to the beach. The municipality gave permits to that hotel, and the town began to be destroyed. Drugs arrived, the turtles disappeared, and the mangroves disappeared. People in the community are out of work and have had to return to fishing. Those of us who eat are those who fish”.

“In San Juanillo, we are threatened by foreign tourism. We fishermen get in the way on the beach. It's very hard”.

“In Manzanillo, fishermen don't even have anywhere to leave their boats. And there are 20 of us”

“In San Juanillo, we had a small kitchen that helped us at the end of the year, but now they have made us remove it from the beach. There are 32 members in San Juanillo. The kitchen was a Christmas bonus there, but they took away the possibility of putting the kitchen on the beach”.

“In the Térraba Sierpe mangrove, they are involving the four shellfish associations into Environmental Services. We have to go and sign, and they are doing the paperwork. The associations have to be up to date with the Ministry of Finance. Our association, which does not have everything in order in terms of paperwork and legal requirements, is not going to receive the subsidies. The associations must be up to date legally, and that requires resources that we often do not have”.



**Working group #1, facilitated by Vivienne Solís Rivera**

## Group #2: -Contributions of small-scale fishing in COFI and other spaces-

The exercise begins by presenting the important instruments in the area of small-scale fishing.

Marvin Fonseca Borrás, as the group facilitator, opened the discussion by providing the general context: Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainability of Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. These guidelines were developed thanks to the contributions of small-scale fishers around the world. The Tárcoles Declaration highlighted the needs of the small-scale fishing sector in Costa Rica and Latin America. This contributed to the Guidelines that were released in 2014. The detail with these is that they are voluntary, but Costa Rica issued a decree that makes them binding. They talk about a human rights approach, putting small-scale fisheries first. Food security contributes more, and they are the ones who get the least. Efforts must be made for greater inclusion; the guidelines guarantee a voice and the right to decision-making.

Jesús Chaves: “More than 160 countries signed them, but they are not implementing them”.

David Chacón: “When the Guidelines were approved, the biggest concern was how to implement them. It was a challenge for Costa Rica, but the Network went to the communities to explain it. We have been close, but we have been sent down, it has been complicated”.

Sonia Medina: “The Guidelines have not been implemented because they are not law. And that is what the small-scale fishing sector needs. There is talk that the Guidelines were adopted at the international level, but no one has adopted them. ULAPA is making an effort to disseminate and implement them”.

Marvin reinforces the discussion by giving some examples of implementation policies in the area of small-scale fishing:

Implementation plans: Call to Action and Standards of Conduct.

Sustainable Development Goals: Poverty eradication - Food security - Marine issues. Small-scale fisheries were included in these goals.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Conservation is not possible without people.



### **Working group #2 facilitated by Marvin Fonseca Borrás**

#### **Group #3: -Human rights-based approach-**

This station-based exercise provided information on the human rights-based approach to conservation and small-scale artisanal fishing. This group was facilitated by Ivannia Ayales, who provided the context for opening the discussion.

The following was then discussed: Protection and social security are necessary, but the rules are always imposed from outside. The traditional knowledge of fishers is not respected, and therefore policies lack the perspective and wisdom of fishers. This is why organization and collective action are important in order to influence public policy. Public policies should take into account the diversity of people, men, women, youth, indigenous peoples, and local communities, as well as the diverse cultures that inhabit our country and have small-scale artisanal fishing as a way of life.

“States have yet to fully comply with international agreements that have more force than the country's own laws”.

There is a great deal of inequality in the application of laws and in the fair distribution of benefits. There is no fair distribution of the benefits of conservation.

The lack of clarity on the part of the State also divides the different sectors and fleets within the fishing industry.

The country is not truly complying with Target 23 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which recognizes women in value chains and their decent work.

Small-scale fishing must be accompanied by a comprehensive vision with a range of services such as water, electricity, health, education, training, social protection, and work, among others.

“It is important to strengthen the Network of Marine Responsible Fishing Areas and Marine Life Territories with the anchors of international work”.

“Train people for leadership”.

More knowledge about human rights. We need to have knowledge of the rights to which the country has committed itself by signing agreements and regulations.

Train decision-makers so that laws reflect the needs of fishers.

In order for rights to be fulfilled, it is necessary to have a voice and knowledge.

We must be aware of the Guidelines and fight for equal opportunities and gender equality, because discriminatory treatment still occurs.

We must recognize the value chain and the contribution of women and young people in fishing.



**Working Group #3 facilitated by Ivannia Ayales Cruz**

Ivannia closes the discussion: A human rights-based approach must also include values such as loyalty, transparency, dialogue, communication, respect, collective action, solidarity, and diversity. Rules for coexistence are also important. Bill No. 24,626, which includes issues of interest to small-scale artisanal fisheries, must be approved.

*"We must have the right to have rights". David Chacon, CoopeTarcoles R.L*

## Plenary - How do we feel about the exercise of the stations?

- How does it benefit us as fishermen to learn about and participate in these international conferences?
- Do you think it is important to continue participating in international forums?
- Would the Network like to participate in these forums?
- What happens once leaders or representatives of the Network participate?
- Is feedback provided to the fishing communities to which they belong?
- How would the Network like to participate in these forums?

David Chacón: "We don't have the right to have rights. We can't think about rights if fishermen are working without their licenses."

Vivienne asks, **"What is the point of these international meetings then? Do they serve any purpose?"**

Carlos Martínez: "Of course. They serve to highlight that my country is violating my rights."

Davis Solano: "They serve to learn how fishing works in other countries. The Network should participate in these spaces."

Rosa Sandoval: "Strategic alliances are created at these meetings. CoopeSoliDar R.L supports them by providing information and guidance. They send them the information. For example, in El Salvador, a mining law was passed. We are located on a volcanic chain, and they need to activate the volcanoes to extract the gold. We all thought it was on the hill, but it was banned because it polluted the water. But it wasn't on the hill; they went to the sea. And we can't do anything about it. They have already given us instructions not to go near it. Free prior informed knowledge has empowered us to ask questions about this project. They told us that they will use a kind of sound to drive away the species from where they are going to detonate the bombs, but if the species leave, what are we going to fish for afterwards?"

Marvin Fonseca: "The experience of El Salvador is one of the clearest examples of the impact of blue economy in small scale fishing communities. Now known as the 'blue fear' by world small-scale fishers."

María Carrillo: "When we were in Lisbon, my experience was at the breakfasts and training sessions we had there. Every day we had breakfast and talked, and that's how we made the SSF Call to Action. It's important that we always give feedback."

David Chacón: "At CoopeTárcoles, we have fought collectively. In stronger structures at the Costa Rican level. We were in a confederation that did not work because it did not have the flexibility that the Network has, where we have been since 2014 and where the interests of small-scale fishers are represented. Now we are also in ULAPA. The Network is linking up with other international networks.

Silvina Paniagua: "Whenever we have needed support, we have received it from CoopeSoliDar R.L., ever since we began our struggle with also receiving support from Gustavo Meneses. We have been with the 12 Paddle decree and now we feel like well-known shellfish gatherers. Thanks to their support, I now have my shellfish gathering license.



**Silvina Paniagua shows her shellfish harvesting license.**

Vivienne Solís: "There are three important international meetings coming up. To leave the country, we need passports and to make preparations. We need more people to go, and we need the people who participate to be diverse. Before 2014, there were few small-scale fishers in these international spaces. This year, for example, Cassidy Abraham from the Network had the opportunity to participate in the Honduran SSF Fishers' Congress.

These meetings are: the SSF Summit prior to COFI, where there is already a registration form and you can show your interest in participating. It is important that you fill it out.

COFI itself.

Next comes COP 17 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. We are in Costa Rica, but there is a Mesoamerican and international context where the Network can participate

and change the situation of fishers. It is clear from today's session that we must change things, based on the vision of all of you.

Jesús Chaves "There is a Network chat, where information about the results of these meetings in which we participate is always sent. We can all be in this chat; it is important to integrate ourselves. In the coming days, we must draw up a work plan and define what we want to participate in and which communities to visit."

### **Session 3: Presentations by SSF regional organizations representatives.**

#### **Representative of the Latin American Union of Artisanal Fishermen (ULAPA).**

Rosa Sandoval: "Firstly, in ULAPA, each representative has two spaces to ensure participation."

David Chacón: "ULAPA was born out of a void in representation in Latin America and internationally. The statutes were drawn up under Chilean law. Once a representative participates, they must share the information with their country and communities."

Sonia Medina gives an overview of ULAPA's main activities in different parts of the world. ULAPA was created out of a need for Latin American fishermen to be heard. It was created in Chile because of the support this country provides to fishing and the possibility of seeking resources.

The Board of Directors is presented, headed by Zoila Bustamante as president, Marta Machazek as secretary, and Oscar Marroquín as vice president.

The organizations that make up ULAPA are presented, as well as the various areas of work: Defense of coastal and marine territories - Organizational strengthening - Visibility of the role of women in artisanal fishing - Marine and coastal governance - Climate change and resilience - Fight against illegal fishing and transparent markets - Rights, conflicts, and representation.

Jesús Chaves asks what the procedures are for formally joining ULAPA.

David Chacón points out that the Network cannot join because it must be duly registered. If the Network wishes to join ULAPA, it must submit a formal request to the Steering Committee.

#### **Presentation of the World Forum of Fisherfolk and Fishworkers (WFF)**

Rosa Sandoval shares that she is part of the National Federation of Limited Liability Artisanal Fishing Cooperatives of El Salvador (FACOPADES) in El Salvador. FACOPADES

first joined the Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Central America (CONFEPESCA). After much work, they joined the World Forum of Fisher People and Fish Workers, which works with fishermen and sea workers, promoting their human rights and livelihoods.

The Global Forum of Fishermen and Fishworkers represents national organizations of small-scale fishermen.

The bodies of the Global Forum of Fisherfolk and Fishworkers are detailed below:

The General Assembly (the main deliberative assembly)

The Regional Councils (responsible for ensuring coordination among regional members)

The Coordination Committee (responsible for representing the Global Forum of Fishermen and Fishery Workers)

The Executive Committee (responsible for handling all administrative and financial matters)

The most public figures of the Global Forum of Fishermen and Fisherworkers are co-chairs Margaret Nakato and Arthur Bogason.

#### **Presentation of the Consortium of Indigenous and Local Community Conservation Areas (ICCA) - Consortium.**

Jesús Chaves shares how the structure works.

He shares that one of the core issues and objectives of the consortium work is the defense of human rights to land tenure, health, education, and decent work.

It is shared that the Network of Marine Responsible Fishing Areas and Marine Territories of life is a formal member of the Global ICCA Consortium.

Vivienne closes the day's work. She shares that today's goal was to get an overview of the major global spaces and their potential for discussing issues of interest to small-scale fisheries. She shares how the Network has also managed to insert itself into global spaces and congratulates all on the work.

**DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19 - 2025**

**Field experience: Storage, fish waste management, marketing, and management of fish products.**

From 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., visit the National Food Supply and Distribution Center (CENADA).



**Workshop participants visit CENADA.**

The National Food Supply and Distribution Center (CENADA) is Costa Rica's leading wholesale market, which aims to facilitate services and conditions for the wholesale supply of perishable products for subsequent distribution to parallel markets throughout the country.

Its objective:

To facilitate services and conditions for the wholesale supply of perishable products for subsequent distribution to parallel markets throughout the country.



**Workshop participants visit CENADA.**

## **Session 4: Reflections on the visit to the National Food Supply and Distribution Center (CENADA)**

*Who is really responsible for conservation?*

During the visit, it was identified that, although there are regulations for the protection of species, practices that put marine biodiversity at risk are still observed. For example, sales of endangered species such as parrotfish and endangered mollusks were seen. This raises the question of how the country actually monitors and controls what is sold and how sustainable it is.

### **Use of and access to marketing spaces**

The discussion focuses on the fact that, although there are infrastructures or fairs where SSF fisher products can be sold, the costs of renting space and the formalization requirements become barriers for many small-scale fishers. This limits their ability to compete on equal terms with intermediaries or external actors who are better positioned economically.

### **Lack of knowledge about fishing among those who sell fish**

Another point noted is that some people involved in the marketing of marine products do not have knowledge of fishing or how the sea works, unlike small-scale fishers, who do have accumulated experience, responsible practices, and traditional knowledge.

## **Need for regulation and fair prices**

There is an urgent need to standardize prices within the Network to prevent abuse, inequality, and speculation. During the visit, the example of piangüas (mollusks) was discussed, where the price can vary significantly: while at CENADA the price is 4,000 colones per 100 units, in communities such as Puerto Cortés they are sold for up to 7,000 colones per 100 units. These differences directly affect the income of fishermen and gatherers and generate inequality within the value chains.

## **Proposals under discussion**

- Create internal fair price agreements for marine products sold among members of the Network.
- Promote community sales spaces with institutional support, where those who practice responsible fishing are given priority.
- Strengthen knowledge about vulnerable species and conservation practices, especially among traders who do not come from the fishing sector.
- Promote accessible formalization mechanisms, reducing costs and simplifying processes for small scale fishers.

## **Session 5: Positioning of Regional experiences: Emblematic Cases and Impact.**

Vivienne Solís Rivera opens the afternoon session, sharing the process carried out in Mesoamerica with the emblematic territories. Videos of the cases are presented and a space for discussion is opened:

Garífuna Experience – Honduras:

<https://youtu.be/wmhFmWVSfjc?si=hTR4kJ1kIB2KoAMo>

Lago Bayano Experience – Comarca Majé Emberá Druá in Panama:

[https://youtu.be/EUtcV2yZgIE?si=GmQuO59ayJ4x\\_VeU](https://youtu.be/EUtcV2yZgIE?si=GmQuO59ayJ4x_VeU)

Ngabe Bugle Experience – Panama:

[https://youtu.be/551-aEPZ\\_xQ?si=zfrxzpSVOIIXTGny](https://youtu.be/551-aEPZ_xQ?si=zfrxzpSVOIIXTGny)

Experience in Nayarit – Mexico:

<https://youtu.be/037GS6MiHms?si=tnDhFiazlZVSUJLr>

Jesús Chaves shares his experience with the Network in Costa Rica: "It is important to have a network as a representative group. We are 23 communities versus 27 protected areas, which has reduced our fishing grounds.

There are small areas of responsible fishing where fishing communities have had to fight to ensure that fishing can continue. In Barra del Colorado, we are surrounded by protected areas. That is why we need Bill No. 24,626 to be passed to save small-scale fishing. The Network is what unites all representatives, and we can fight together for our rights. The Network is an open structure. The important thing is to be united, with information, with knowledge, united with the same goal.

David Chacón: "In 2004, there was a void in the organizational part of the country. We small-scale fishers needed a way to move forward together. Each of us, from our own communities, but together. Many ideas were considered, such as a federation or other organizational structures. But legal issues put a stop to that idea. We said we didn't want money so as not to get dirty. And we thought of an open structure. And in 2014, at the Presidential Palace, we managed to formalize the Network."

Vivienne Solís: "The Network defends a rights-based approach; it is not a political body; it has no legal status; coordination is shared by a man and a woman; free entry and free exit; diverse knowledge."

### **Plenary discussion: What are the common themes we see in the videos?**

- Loss of access and tenure rights.
- Loss of food security.
- Loss of identity and way of life in small-scale fishing.
- Ongoing violation of rights.
- Aquaculture carried out in a traditional manner and promoting the common good.

Other topics discussed:

**Clarification on the discussion of recreational fishing - sport fishing and small-scale commercial fishing.**

German Pochet explains that:

- 1.) Tourist fishing: It is a sale of services. With a boat, offering a service. Permit required.
- 2.) Sport fishing: fishing as a sport. No services are provided. A permit is required. Permits are sold by INCOPECA
- 3.) Small-scale commercial fishing: no license is granted because there are no studies.

Who are the fish for? For those who pay the most? Or for food security? That is a form of blue economy, which means I sell to the highest bidder.

At the request of those present, a joint reading of bill 24.626 was held.



**Working groups reading the Project of Law 24.626**

## Session 6 - Presentation of Project of Law 24.626

*By Germán Pochet Ballester*

The discussion begins on the importance of moving from a decree to a law that consolidates the rights of small-scale fishermen in Costa Rica. The Project began in 2015 and is a reflection of a long-term process.

Carlos Martínez: "It is important to understand the key issues, objectives, purposes, and guiding principles."

German Pochet: "Article 8 recognizes traditional knowledge as a key element to be taken into account."

Sonia Medina: "Issues of marine spatial planning and tenure are the responsibility of INCOPECA and other state institutions."

Joseph Álvarez: "The issue of land tenure and the need to ensure this point when discussing marine spatial plans is very important. Another important issue is financing."

German explains that reforms can be made to the current bill. These reforms would make the project of law to go back to the agricultural affairs committee for approval and then back to the plenary for a vote.

David Chacón explains that marine responsible fishing areas are not working because INCOPECA does not follow up on them. They work because of the work done by the small-scale fishing communities themselves.

Sonia Medina highlights the importance of organization and that the organization can be vigilant of the fishermen present.

German Pochet points out the importance of conducting a fishing census to determine the population of small-scale fisherfolks. Move forward slowly on rights.

The importance of sharing experiences is highlighted as key to learning how to defend marine life territories.



**Ivannia Ayales Cruz and German Pochet Ballester present Project of Law 24.626.**

### **DAY 3 - THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20 – 2025**

#### **Session 7: Remembering the Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainability of Small-Scale Artisanal Fisheries**

Vivienne Solís Rivera opened the meeting by reminding everyone that small-scale fishing has been the subject of a long struggle involving many people over many years. Now we must join the fight. *(see presentation attached below)*

David Chacón explains that the Guidelines are a long road ahead; they bring together the feelings of small-scale fishers around the world. One voice, one mandate. In Costa Rica, the first meeting was held in 2008-2009 in Tárcoles; we started with a zero document that was gradually consolidated. In Costa Rica, the process began in Tárcoles. Then, in 2014, the internationally approved the document was translated into three languages.

#### **Where did the Guidelines come from? From the global fishing movement.**

Vivienne explains that before the Guidelines, the FAO launched the Voluntary Fisheries Code. In 2003, fishermen from around the world, meeting at the FAO, agreed to initiate a document that would consider the rights of small-scale fisheries. In 2008 in Bangkok, fishermen from around the world outlined their needs and interests, and a global process was initiated. A number of global workshops were held, including the meeting in Tárcoles.

During the presentation, tribute was paid to a great representative of the worlds small scale fishers, who is no longer with us. David Chacón and Vivienne Solis paid tribute to

the memory of Chandrika Charma. Vivienne recounted her enormous work at CIAPA in favor of small-scale fisheries and their people.

Vivienne explains that there are millions of small-scale fishers around the world. Half of them are women. The importance of the contribution of the work of men and women in terms of the economy and food security of small-scale fishers is recognized.

David Chacón reflects on his work process after 20 years of national and international meetings. Along these lines, Sonia Medina also points out that these international meetings also allow for a comparison of Costa Rica's situation with that of the rest of the world.

Vivienne explains that the guidelines are for everyone and cover small-scale fishing in rivers and seas; global nutrition and food security; reducing poverty; and promoting the voices of small-scale fishers in decision-making. They are aimed at everyone involved in small-scale fishing. Everyone is invited to participate. The fundamental themes of the guidelines are environmental sustainability, the fishermen's way of life, and social protection issues.

In the current context, we are under attack from gentrification and corporations. The small-scale fishing way of life is more than just fishing. It is a comprehensive development that requires the participation of public institutions. The guidelines address climate change, as well as its impacts and adaptation measures.

Sonia Medina comments on her experience and how she is part of the Emergency Commission on Isla Venado and every time there is a climate emergency, such as a flood, institutions do not think about the fishing world.

Silvina Paniagua points out that they held a meeting with INCOPECSA on the issue of climate change and support during the banned season. We realized that we are not a priority in INCOPECSA's current policy. An official told us, **"If you don't have a formal permit, you are nothing."**

Rufina Gómez points out that some INCOPECSA officials want to help and work with the small-scale sector, but do not know how.

Carlos Martínez: "In Barra del Colorado, we were flooded for three months. When we consulted the Emergency Commission, only a few people were helped."

Ivannia Ayales comments that the country must take climate change plans seriously.

David Chacón points out that they are currently meeting in Belem on the issue of climate change, but where does that leave the SSF sector?

Vivienne goes on to explain that the Guidelines state:

- Recognize the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development.
- End marginalization.
- Participation in decision-making

Information and capacity building are important. The Guidelines are a tool for accountability. How can this be measured? The work that has been done to measure progress and setbacks in the areas of responsible fishing is shared. Measure it comprehensively.

María Fernández shares the threats that indigenous territories are experiencing. See how the territories are being deforested. The resources and profits go to others.

Jesús Chaves shares the situation of his community: "My community represents half of the canton. We live between a National Park, a Marine Management Area, and a Refuge, in the northern part of the Nicaraguan border. Practically 100% of the territory is protected areas. Even so, the SSF fishing territory was achieved to be recognize as a Marine Responsible fishing area."



**David Chacón Rojas and Vivienne Solís Rivera, reviewing the Guidelines.**

## **Session 8: CoopeSoliDar R.L – Bioluris Presentation: Some Regulatory instruments that position the Guidelines in the National Context.**

*By German Pochet Ballester*

He begins his presentation by reinforcing the idea that there are binding and non-binding international meetings and agreements. All forums contribute. Participation is very important because it brings experience and knowledge.

Regarding the draft bill "General Law for the Sustainability of the Small-Scale Artisanal Fisheries Sector, number 24,626," he shared the history of the bill. He explained that it has taken more than 10 years to draft. Although institutions often fail to respond, progress must be made.

### **Fundamentals of the law:**

- It is based on the SSF Voluntary Guidelines.
- It consolidates the participation of all small-scale fishing organizations and all individuals.
- It is committed to marine spatial planning based on shared governance.
- The Guidelines ensure SSF rights.

### **Guiding principles of the Law:**

- Marine spatial planning
- Marine Responsible Fishing Areas.

Today, marine responsible fishing areas are supported by a decree. Another example is that if there are no small-scale fishermen, the decree would cease to have a basis. This is unsustainable. It is pointed out that an alternative must be found, such as small-scale artisanal recreational fishing. The tourist fishing sector is not interested in recreational fishing.

### **Twelve Paddle Model, based on Executive Decree: MAG – 42.955**

This is a process that originated here, designed to give us access to the sea as small-scale fishermen. The 12-paddle model is an executive decree. This model has already been made official by the government through Executive Decree MAG-42.955.

This model is based on the declaration of public interest in the small-scale artisanal fishing sector development model contained in the public-private partnership for small-scale fishing in responsible marine fishing areas and marine life territories (Executive Decree No. 42955-MAG).

## **What is the model based on?**

### **Objective:**

1. To recognize the importance of the small-scale artisanal fishing sector as a priority economic, productive, and socio-cultural sector for the country.
2. Develop a process towards the regularization of men and women who live around small-scale artisanal fishing, considering each of the productive phases of the value chain (pre-fishing, fishing, and post-fishing).
3. To comply with the international commitment to implement voluntary guidelines to achieve the sustainability of small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication.

### **The Twelve Paddles Model:**

1. An organized small-scale artisanal fishing community
2. That presents an innovative approach to community well-being and responsible fishing,
3. Which has defined a governance model in line with this objective
4. That the organization is structured as a social solidarity economy entity (association or cooperative) and
5. That is part of the network of marine responsible fishing areas.
6. That the right to advance the process of generating biological information under formal working conditions is recognized and
7. Promotes the opening of national and international markets through traceability
8. It can use digital platforms to generate interaction with its consumers
9. That it moves towards fair and efficient marketing
10. That they are willing to be audited to certify their process and product.
11. Appeal to the government to legalize their activity through licenses, if necessary.
12. Remain a success story and help replicate the model in other fisheries nationally and internationally.

This model was proposed by the Network, accompanied by CoopeSoliDar R.L., and there is a methodological guide that was applied in several communities in Tárcoles, Dominicalito, and Cahuita. The institutions did not want to implement it. So, the Network prepared and sent three appeals for legal protection, and we went to the Constitutional Court, which told us to go to the Contentious Court because INCOPECA and the minister have to implement it in 2025.

The 12 Paddles recognize small-scale fishers for their status as fishers.

The 12 Paddles are based on the Guidelines, which recognize the small-scale sector and the maintenance of its small-scale fishing activity.

The 12 Paddles were developed with the traditional knowledge of small-scale fishing representatives.

### **Meeting with Representatives of the Congress: María Marta Padilla and Katherine Moreira on Bill 24.626 - General Law for the Sustainability of the Small-Scale Artisanal Fishing Sector**

During the opening session, Germán Pochet thanked the communities for their participation and provided context for the three days of work. He highlighted the progress of Bill 24.626, supported by the deputies present and by Deputy Carlos Andrés Robles Obando of the Christian Social Unity faction, who is a deputy for the Province of Puntarenas but was unable to attend the session due to a prior commitment.

The communities present belong to different coastal and indigenous territories in the Pacific, Caribbean, and southern regions of the country, in addition to the participation of a fisherwoman from El Salvador and representatives of the World Forum of Artisanal Fishermen, Rosa Sandoval.

The fishermen and fisherwomen present put forward a couple of key ideas, such as:

- The project of law is a key tool for more than 10,000 small-scale artisanal fishers.
- The project of law was created by fishermen for fishermen.
- It represents food security, sustainability, and the protection of traditional practices, including indigenous ones.

María Marta Padilla: expressed her commitment to the bill because of its sustainable approach and because it represents historically neglected sectors.

Katherine Moreira: shared her family connection to artisanal fishing, explained the current legislative process, and reaffirmed her political support. She highlighted the urgency of passing the bill and the

## Main issues raised

1. *Lack of funding and support for participation in meetings:*  
Fishermen do not receive travel allowances or logistical support, which limits their advocacy.
2. *Social security:*  
Shellfish gatherers and fishermen are calling for differentiated insurance that is accessible and adapted to their income, similar to that of UPA Nacional for farmers.
3. *Care and family conditions:*  
There is an urgent need for care networks and differentiated schedules; women reported risks to their children when accompanying them on fishing trips.
4. *Land tenure and access to the sea:*  
In areas such as the Northern Caribbean, JAPDEVA's ownership prevents them from obtaining permits, electricity meters, and legal security. A review of the legislation on the Maritime Terrestrial Zone is requested.

Katherine Moreira explains that: The bill is in an extraordinary session, prioritized after the approval of the budget. Efforts will be made to incorporate comments from the communities. If it is not approved in the extraordinary session, it will be promoted in the regular session.

Both Congress representatives are committed to following up on the issue in the field and reaffirmed that they were honored to defend the sector. The communities remain hopeful that Law 24.626 will be approved soon to guarantee their rights, security, and decent living conditions.



**Representatives of the Network of Marine Responsible Fishing Areas and Marine Life Territories with the Congress representatives present at the session.**

**Reflection in Plenary:**

Alex Vílchez: "That we have a voice and that we are strong. We are clear about what we are going to ask to be approved."

David Chacón: "We are working for rights. The Congress women saw that there was organization. They saw an organized network, with representation from the communities. Deputy Padilla envisioned inclusion. A project must not only be economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. The fourth leg of the stool is inclusion."

Rosa Sandoval: "The fact that the Congress representatives believe in the project, that they know about it, also supports them in their struggles."

Sonia Medina: "My brother and I formed a community bank, and with Doña Katherine, she has gone to the islands. She understands what this bill means. She has also made moves with the political parties to get this bill passed."

German Pochet: "Now we have to send the motions to the representatives and follow up. It's interesting how the Network controlled the agenda and achieved the goals we set for ourselves. This is possible within the framework of an organization."

Gustavo Meneses: "Good intentions alone are not enough; it is important to assert the rights that must be demanded. This has been a long process, and most have remained and grown stronger as a network, and the contribution of each individual and the territory is valued. It takes a lot of maturity to know that this is not so easy. The leading role you are assuming at the territorial level is important. Your faces are the ones that convince people. It is a very strong intention. What I do believe is that when things are done together and with conviction, the proposed objectives are achieved. This Network must be protected."

Vivienne Solís: "So far, so good. Those who are in contact with members of Congress need to follow up from their territories."

### **Session 9: Space for the Network of Responsible Fishing Marine Areas and Marine Life Territories what are the working lines and activities for 2026?**

During this part of the Network meeting, CoopeSoliDar R.L., as the team that accompanies the Network in its processes, was not present during the session. Based on the notes taken by the fishermen and fisherwomen themselves, the following context is provided:

Representatives from the following communities were present at the session: Limón – Barra del Colorado – Isla Caballo – Puerto Cortes – Tárcoles – Cabuya – La Islita – San Juanillo – Costa Pájaros – Isla Venado – El Jobo – Manzanillo, and Puntarenas.

The participating organizations defined a series of strategic agreements aimed at strengthening the Network internally, advancing in key political spaces, and consolidating territorial work in the country's different coastal communities. These agreements reflect the collective commitment to guarantee the continuity of community management, promote the sustainability of small-scale artisanal fishing, and provide the technical support necessary for the Network to continue consolidating itself as an effective coordination space.

**Action plan of the Network of Responsible Fishing Marine Areas and Marine Life Territories for the year 2026:**

1. Continue with Project of Law 24.626
2. Continue visits to Jobo – Manzanillo (southern Caribbean) – Limón – Cabuya – Costa Pájaros – La Isleta, and San Juanillo.
3. Continue the 12 Remos
4. Resume the IV National Congress on Small-Scale Fishing in 2026.
5. Create a solidarity fund for fishermen in "special" circumstances. This fund will be assessed by the coordinators and CoopeSoliDar R.L.
6. Provide technical support at the various meetings in which the Network may participate.
7. Each organization will be responsible for keeping its organization in order and active.

**Regarding the election of the new coordination team:**

This year, a co-coordination team of three people will be implemented: one woman, one man, and one young person. The participation of a young person stems from the group of young people present and their interest in becoming more involved in the processes implemented by the Network.

**New coordination:**

Pamela Méndez – Marine Responsible Fishing Area of Dominicalito

Carlos Martínez – Marine Responsible Fishing Area of Barra del Colorado

Jennifer Torres – Marine Responsible Fishing Area of Isla Caballo

In the event that Jennifer is unable to attend a meeting, the young people have assigned a substitute:

Tatiana Martínez – Barra del Colorado Marine Responsible Fishing Area.

The new coordination will take effect in January 2026.



**Pamela Méndez – Carlos Martínez and Jennifer Torres. New Cordination of the Network**

#### **DAY 4 - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21 – 2025**

#### **Session 10: Final plenary session to share the agreements reached at the Network meeting the previous night.**

Jesús Chaves: "Every day we have to attract more fishermen to our Network. The work is not easy; we have to work with enthusiasm and interest. We are leaving the Network in good hands. And you know the work we are doing. I have had the support of colleagues and technicians, and that is the foundation that strengthens us. That allows us to move forward. We feel that we have done a lot but we hardly see any achievements, but the fact is that these are slow but sure steps and that has allowed us to continue existing. The negotiations we have held have made a lot of progress. Let's not leave the new coordination alone, they are going to be the coordinators and representatives, whatever happens in our communities, communicate it to the network to find solutions.

Vivienne Solís: "We are defending the rights of fishermen. CoopeSoliDar R.L. will continue to support them."

David Chacón: "I believe that dreams are beautiful when many of us dream them, as we did when we created a structure where we are all represented, which we achieved in 2014. We are now on the eve of 2026 and we can see everything we have achieved with the Network. We are about to have a Network that fills legal gaps. Thanks to all the coordinators who have been here and best of luck to the new coordination team. We are going to try to add and not subtract. Here we are, rowing together."

Carlos Martínez: "Yesterday, the assembly reached some agreements, including appointing us. We now have a coordination team of three people and one alternate. The young people were the ones who appointed their coordinators, and that's what they did. We made some agreements, such as following up on the bill in Congress and seeking out other communities that left to find out why they left. We represent more than 10,000 fishermen, but the number may be higher."

Pamela Méndez: "First, I want to thank you for the trust you have placed in me. It has been very important for me to take this step, and feeling your support has been very moving. Thank you to CoopeSoliDar R.L. for always encouraging me to participate."

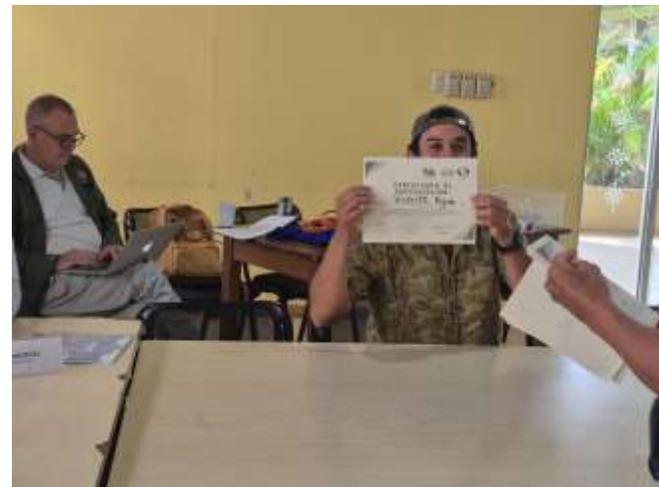
Jennifer Torres: "Yesterday we chose the youth representative, and I am truly grateful for your trust in me. I believe I have the experience because I am the secretary of my association."

Marvin Fonseca: "CoopeSoliDar R.L. works with the coordination that you choose. The important thing here is to be able to move forward together. We need to reinforce the issue of the countryside, and I think it's important to be transparent. When we've had resources, CoopeSoliDar R.L. has covered the legal costs to get your organization in order. Now there are cases like Barra del Colorado, which have to cover their costs. If not, German is happy to lower his prices because he's committed to the Network."

Ivannia Ayales: "I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate you and highlight this democratic environment, always reaching consensus and always reaching agreements, which is very important, as is the importance of training more leaders and giving vitality to the network. A national reference point for small-scale fishing."

Vivienne Solís: "We are going to the IV National Fishing Congress. We are thinking of 5-6 people from your communities to participate. 2026 is going to be a very busy year."

Jesús Chaves: "Thank you very much for the space. Thank you to CIAPA and CoopeSoliDar R.L for bringing us together these days."



**Presentation of participation certificates**

*Certificates of participation (see below)*

## **Participatory Evaluation of the Workshop:**

### ***Most valued aspects of the workshop***

In general, the group expressed a high level of satisfaction with the workshop. The elements they enjoyed most were:

- Exchange of experiences and knowledge: The opportunity to share experiences among participants was highlighted as one of the most enriching aspects.
- Acquisition of new knowledge: The technical and conceptual content provided learning that was relevant to their daily work.
- Political advocacy: The opportunity to raise their voices before members of Congress was highlighted, which strengthened their sense of participation and representation.
- Human relations: The creation of new friendships and alliances was considered an added value of the meeting.
- Coexistence and coordination: Good organization and a collaborative atmosphere facilitated the development of activities.

### ***Areas for improvement for future workshops***

- Participants identified several opportunities to strengthen the format and methodology:
- Greater dynamism: They suggest incorporating more participatory and movement-based activities to maintain the group's energy throughout the day.
- More field visits: They consider it valuable to complement theory with practical experiences in territories and communities.

### ***Topics of interest for future training***

- With regard to training needs, the group expressed interest in delving deeper into:
- Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines: Strengthen understanding and application of this international framework.
- Knowledge of fishing communities: Through visits that allow observation of the local reality.
- Fisheries management course: Particular interest in training such as the course mentioned in CENADA.
- Greater access to international regulations and forums such as: the Climate Change COP, the Biodiversity COP, and COFI.

## Annexes

*Presentation of the International Context. The Global Biodiversity Framework, and other agreements and initiatives that address environmental issues of interest to small – scale fishing:*

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1RQfi6RrcFGXEDB5nFY6sxQWRSNg62TAr/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=118193046842091292316&rtpof=true&sd=true>

*Remembering the Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainability of Small – Scale Artisanal Fisheries:*

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/13U0XIuGJ90TU2yakSYqe4LgM90lwDVce/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=118193046842091292316&rtpof=true&sd=true>

*Certificates of participation:*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WLTjaQFtAuwB2aWSX6QZZVyVAABUUq01/view?usp=sharing>

*Attendance list:*

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hKzFSUV6XjYtEV7TK1zRiRe4pjd6N3qD?usp=sharing>

## Programme



### PROGRAMME

#### **WORKSHOP ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES AND THE PARTICIPATION AND INFLUENCE OF THE SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL POLICIES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE OCEANS**

##### **I. Introduction**

Small-scale artisanal fisheries require national and regional recognition from the various stakeholders and rights holders involved, in order to comply with current instruments and regulations in favor of this sector, but above all, to strengthen the organizational and political advocacy base in the fulfillment of rights within a framework of equity, justice, and food security.

##### **General objective**

To strengthen knowledge about the progress and challenges in the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainability of Small-Scale Artisanal Fisheries in the national, regional, and international context, learning about and reflecting on specific experiences that take up a human rights perspective on marine conservation.

##### **Specific objectives**

- Continue to build strategic alliances that strengthen the capacities of small-scale fishing rights holders in Costa Rica and the region to understand the struggles and demands in defense of marine territories and the improvement of conditions for those who make small-scale fishing a way of life.

- Identify mechanisms, spaces, and joint strategies that continue to position the Voluntary Guidelines as a living instrument that should gain greater strength in its implementation at the national, regional, and international levels.
- Communicate to different public and private actors the importance and contribution of small-scale artisanal fishing to food security and cultural identity in contexts of change and threats to key sectors in the social, economic, and environmental development of the planet.
- Provide a space for the Network of Responsible Fishing Marine Areas and Marine Life Territories to evaluate its annual work plan and lessons learned for aspects of improvement in its management and programming for 2026.

## II. CONTENTS AND ACTIVITIES

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

#### First session: Methodological conditions and international context

#### Remarks by María Fernández as master of ceremonies, who introduces the Welcome Panel

8:00 to 8:15	<b>Welcome.</b> A panel is formed with representatives from the Network (Jesús), CIAPA (Vivienne), and CoopeSoliDar R.L. Ivannia.
8:15 8:20	PRAYER / REFLECTION (María Fernández)
8:20	Principles of coexistence during the workshop (Cassidy and Ivannia)
8:30 to 9:00	Introduction of participants with the map (Marvin and María Fernández)
9:00	Presentation of the work agenda (CoopeSoliDar R.L. Team)
9:15	Presentation of the international context (Vivienne)

#### ***Conceptual framework and international regulations***

**Presentation of the international context.** What is the global framework, conventions, and initiatives that address environmental issues and small-scale artisanal fishing? **COP CC, Belem Brazil, COP 26 in Armenia, Small-Scale Fisheries Summit, and COFI.** Presented by Vivienne Solís, CoopeSoliDar R.L.

**9:45 to 10:00**                    **Comments and questions**

**10:00**                                **Refreshments**

**10:30 to 11:30**                **Discussion stations.**

Three subgroups are formed using the counting technique (1, 2, 3), with the subgroups located in different areas of the room. **These groups will rotate after 10 minutes of discussion.** A member of the facilitation team will be responsible for managing the time.

**The groups are as follows:**

**First group: Biodiversity, conservation, and climate change.** The group will emphasize the usefulness, significance, and dissemination of information from these forums to small-scale artisanal fishing communities. Participants who have been to biodiversity forums or have experience in the field will also be heard. This group will be led by Vivienne Solís Rivera.

**Second group: Contributions of artisanal fishing to COFI and other spaces** that emphasize food security issues from a conservation perspective, with a focus on small-scale artisanal fishers. This group will be led by Marvin Fonseca Borrás.

**Third group: Human rights approach** in international instruments, investigating who has worked on the issue of women, social protection, land tenure, decent work, and traditional knowledge. This group will be led by Ivannia Ayales Cruz.

**LUNCH**

**AFTERNOON.**

**1:00 to 2:00**                    **General discussion and plenary session answering the following questions and generating a rich debate. Facilitated by Vivienne and Ivannia**

- ❖ How does it benefit us as fishermen to learn about and participate in these international conferences?
- ❖ Do you think it is important to continue participating in international forums?
- ❖ Would the Network like to participate in these forums?
- ❖ What happens once leaders or representatives of the Network participate?

- ❖ Is feedback provided to the fishing communities to which they belong?
- ❖ How would the Network like to participate in these forums?

**2:00 to 5:00**

**Presentations by regional representatives and national authorities. Facilitated by Marvin and Vivienne.**

- ❖ Ms. Daniela Edith González Gámez, Ecuador, representative of the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP)
- ❖ Ms. Rosa Sandoval, representative of the World Forum of Fisher Workers (WFF).
- ❖ Ms. Sonia Medina – Costa Rica. Representative of the Latin American Union of Artisanal Fishermen (ULAPA).
- ❖ Mr. Jesús Chaves, representative of the Consortium of Indigenous and Local Community Conservation Areas (TICCA) and co-coordinator of the Network of Responsible Fishing Areas and Marine Conservation Areas of Costa Rica.

### **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19**

**Field experience: collection, fish waste management, marketing, and management.**

Departure between 5:45 and 6:00 a.m. to CENADA

The person who will welcome us to the talk: Diego Corrales, who will provide a comprehensive overview of the handling and management of fish, shellfish, and related products. This will be followed by a tour of the seafood concessionaires and a talk on the added value of products, prices and marketing, waste management, health, and safety.

The group will return to Guadalupe between 9:45 and 10:00 a.m. for refreshments.

At 11:00 a.m., a discussion will be held to comment on the main findings and conclusions of the visit. This discussion will be facilitated by Marvin.

**LUNCH**

**AFTERNOON**

**Positioning of REGIONAL EXPERIENCES: EMBLEMATIC CASES and impact.**

**Jesús introduces the videos.**

Experience in Costa Rica: Network of responsible fishing areas and marine life territories (where he talks with Jesús)

Experience in Honduras: Defense of the Territory: Sambo Creek and Cayo Bolaños.

Experiences in Panama: Defense of the Veraguas Shield: Ngäbe – Buglé  
Defense of Territory and Ecosystem Services Lake Bayano.

Mexico's experience: Artisanal aquaculture fishing: Nayarit Cooperative

**Comments:**

Cassidy moderates the discussion, emphasizing: What is the importance of this work at the regional level, and how do these experiences strengthen us at the local level and enhance our advocacy capacities?

**DAY THREE – THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20**

**REVIEWING THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SMALL-SCALE ARTISANAL FISHERIES**

**MORNING**

**8:00 to 9:00** A refresher on the Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainability of Small-Scale Artisanal Fisheries will be provided through the following talks:

**From CoopeSoliDar R.L:** emphasis will be placed on the emergence and main issues raised. Led by Vivienne Solís.

**INCOPESCA presentation:** how Costa Rica's public institutions have supported the implementation of the Guidelines.

**9:30 to 10:00** **Refreshments**

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Reflection groups on the Guidelines.

- ❖ Introduce the complete Guidelines and provide a summary.
- ❖ Three subgroups are formed and the chapter of the Guidelines and its topics are read:

1. Tenure in small-scale fisheries
2. Sustainable management of marine resources
3. Social development (employment and value chains) and gender

Questions are raised according to the topic. These questions are in the Guide that will be given to each group coordinator.

Afterwards, one person from the group shares their reflections with the whole group.

## **AFTERNOON**

**1:00 to 2:00**

**CoopeSoliDar – Bioluris presentation:** some regulatory instruments that position the Guidelines in the national context. By German Pochet Ballester.

- ✓ Decree 12 Remos
- ✓ Bill 24,626
- ✓ Other global efforts such as the Call to Action and Standards of Conduct: their progress.

**What are the next steps at the national level?**

**2:00 to 3:30**

**Review of virtual training topics**

Review of the topics covered in the virtual training promoted by CoopeSoliDar R.L. and the Network of Responsible Fishing Marine Areas and Marine Life Territories. What is small-scale artisanal fishing in the context of conservation with a human rights approach?

This is followed by a plenary session, where cards are distributed to workshop participants and they are asked to mention three priorities they have for capacity building.

**3:30 to 4:00**

**Refreshments**

**4:00 onwards**

Space for the Network of Marine Areas for Responsible Fishing and Marine Life Territories. What are the guidelines and activities for 2026?

How have these two years been and where do you want to go in 2026?

Appointment of co-coordinators.

**FOURTH DAY - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21**

**8:00 to 9:45**

Space for sharing agreements

**9:45 to 10:00**

Evaluation and closing of the workshop.

**10:00**

Return to communities.