

PRESS RELEASE

SFP Applauds Ecuador's First National-Level Fishery Management Plan

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Ecuador's Undersecretariat of Fisheries Resources this week launched a new management plan for the country's multi-species small pelagics fishery. [Sustainable Fisheries Partnership \(SFP\)](#) recognized it as an important milestone in national fisheries management in Ecuador. It is the first national-level fishery management plan with established objectives, goals and management measures that have been agreed upon by relevant stakeholders through a participatory and inclusive decision-making process.

"The management plan for small pelagics is the result of collective action between the government authority and different stakeholders involved in the fishery's supply chain," said Ecuador's Undersecretary of Fisheries Resources Ricardo Perdomo. "We were able to demonstrate that we can set goals and objectives that allow us to conserve our fishing resources, maintain the ocean's health, and ensure sources of work and livelihoods for our fishermen through transparent dialogue and scientific evidence. Building this management plan collectively helped us agree on quantitative management rules that we can meet and monitor, to assess progress and compliance."

The plan will enable more sustainable exploitation of the small pelagics fishery, ensuring greater social and economic returns in the long run. The new management plan is the first to be approved under a stipulation in Ecuador's new national fishing and aquaculture law that requires management plans to be developed for fisheries that are not regulated by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

"We are pleased to see the government establishing an official management plan for the path to sustainability of small pelagics," said Carlos Cacao, executive director of Empresa Pesquera Polar and president of the Small Pelagic Commission of the National Fishery Chamber. "Many of the actions in this management plan complement and are derived from the Small Pelagics Sustainability Fishery Improvement Project. This fishery could not continue to be handled without a clear plan. We needed targets and goals to guarantee effective fishing management. There is still a need to allocate more resources to research and management for small pelagics, and our vision is to work collectively with the government and other stakeholders to respond to the challenges of global food security for present and future generations."

The small pelagic fishery is the second-most important fishery in Ecuador (after purse seine tuna). It includes species such as chub mackerel, thread herring and frigate tuna that are mostly used for fish feed. Two years ago, this fishery was plagued by illegal fishing, little government oversight or regulation, weak stakeholder participation and lack of a coherent management strategy. In 2019, the European Union issued a Yellow Card to Ecuador as a warning and need for further action to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The new management plan includes actions to combat IUU fishing, to raise management standards and ensure compliance with EU market requirements.

The management plan was developed through the Small Pelagic Dialogue Platform (SPDP), a co-management mechanism that facilitates active engagement of fishery stakeholders, including the industry-led [Ecuador Small Pelagics Sustainability Fishery Improvement Project](#) (SPS-FIP).

The SPDP was developed and implemented by the Undersecretariat of Fisheries Resources. It is supported by the Global Marine Commodities (GMC) project, an interregional initiative funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that receives technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is facilitated by Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP). The SPS-FIP, comprised of major players in the marine ingredients catch and processing sectors, is led by Ecuador's National Fishery Chamber with the support of GMC and the technical backing

of SFP.

Over the past two years the SPS-FIP has resulted in significant improvements in the fishery. A 2018 stock assessment found that all of the six small pelagic stocks in the fishery were overexploited and half were overfished (2017 data). In October 2020, new stock assessments showed a one-third reduction of the stocks that are overexploited and none of the stocks as overfished (2019 data). These improvements resulted from the implementation of voluntary management measures, including extended fishery closures, developed by the SPS-FIP.

The adoption of the plan is also a key step toward meeting the requirements of [MarinTrust](#) certification, which is the ultimate goal of the SPS-FIP. The MarinTrust Standard is an independent third-party audit and certification program for marine ingredients.



Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) is a US-registered nonprofit that operates globally to rebuild depleted fish stocks and reduce the environmental and social impacts of fishing and fish farming. The organization works by engaging fishery stakeholders and seafood businesses throughout the supply chain to promote the sustainable production of seafood.

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