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Colombia

Project Information

1. Project Title

First Approach to the Implementation of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement in Colombia

2. Project Summary

by organising and conducting a national intersectoral workshop that involves the expertise, knowledge and support of FAO/WTO experts, and with the participation of the different stakeholders from the Colombian public and private sector, NGOs and coastal fisheries communities where the most appropriate implementation of the agreement would be discussed. With the results of the national workshop and subsequent strategic meetings, a National Document concerning a dissertation on the implementation of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement in Colombia would be provided. Finally, having this dissertation as a basis for next steps, a proposal to apply for Category 2 funding support will be developed, which will be integrated into a larger programme supported by other development organizations contributing to the implementation of the Agreement.

3. Objectives

GENERAL OBJECTIVE Promoting a clear understanding of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies to be applied through national policies, and the practicalities of its implementation to support marine conservation and sustainable small-scale fisheries in Colombia. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES 1. Organise and conduct a National Workshop to review and discuss the Implementation of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement in Colombia. 2. Write the First National Document concerning the Implementation of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement in Colombia. 3. Arrange and hold meetings with national stakeholders to communicate the results of the project and advocate towards the effective implementation of the Agreement. 4. Design and formulate a consistent project to apply for Fish Fund's Category 2 funding support, which will be integrated into a larger national programme supported by other development organisations contributing to the national implementation of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

4. Context

In March 2025, Colombia formally accepted the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, committing to align national policy with its binding disciplines: prohibiting subsidies to vessels or operators engaged in IUU fishing (Art. 3); to fishing of overfished stocks unless measures are in place to rebuild them (Art. 4); and to unregulated high seas fishing outside any coastal jurisdiction or RFMO competence (Art. 5). The Agreement also strengthens transparency obligations (Art. 8) through enhanced notifications on stock status, conservation measures, fleet capacity, and subsidy recipients, and requires domestic laws and administrative procedures to ensure prohibited subsidies are not granted or maintained. While limited flexibilities apply to developing Members, implementation will demand strong coordination, technical alignment, and capacity building. In Colombia, awareness and technical understanding of these obligations remain low across government agencies, the fishing sector, and civil society. Stakeholders lack a shared, practical interpretation of the Agreement's requirements and implications for fisheries management, marine conservation, and subsidy policy reform. Without this shared foundation, it will be challenging to design coherent national measures, comply with notification requirements, and use the Agreement's opportunities for technical assistance. This project is the first step in a national process to operationalise the Agreement. Its objectives directly support implementation: 1. National Workshop – builds common understanding of obligations under Arts. 3–5 and 8, including due-process for IUU determinations and science-based stock status. 2. First National Document – outlines legal/administrative measures (Arts. 3.7, 8.3), data needs, and priority actions to meet notification requirements. 3. Stakeholder Meetings – coordinate authorities, fishing communities, and NGOs to plan operationalisation of subsidy prohibitions and transparency provisions. 4. Category 2 Proposal Design – positions Colombia to access further technical assistance (Art. 7) and integrate implementation into a broader national programme. By producing Colombia's first guiding reference, convening key actors, and framing the roadmap for future action, this initiative will settle the ground for subsequent legal, institutional, and operational measures—advancing marine conservation and the sustainability of small-scale fisheries while ensuring full compliance with the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.

5. Expected Results

- Workshop successfully conducted with participation of at least 40 representatives from government, fishing sector, academia, and civil society, covering all major stakeholder groups.
- Workshop report produced and validated, containing agreed recommendations linked to Articles 3, 4, 5, and 8 of the Agreement.
- First national guiding document on the Agreement implementation
- Document drafted, peer-reviewed, and endorsed by AUNAP and Ministry of Agriculture.
- Inclusion of a legal and administrative gap analysis, and a proposed set of priority actions to comply with the Agreement's disciplines.
- Roadmap validated by key sectoral stakeholders through meeting minutes.
- Strengthened multi-stakeholder engagement
- At least three targeted follow-up meetings held with specific stakeholder groups (government, fishing communities, NGOs/private sector).
- 80% of participants in post-meeting surveys report improved understanding of the Agreement and its national implications.
- Category 2 funding proposal
- Proposal developed and ready to submit to the Fish Fund Category 2 call, aligned with national roadmap and endorsed by AUNAP.

Implementing entities

6. Implementing Entity

The National Authority of Aquaculture and Fishing (AUNAP), as the national governmental institution responsible of regulating small-scale and large-scale fisheries in Colombia; and MarViva Foundation, as technical and logistic facilitator to implement the project budget and objective.

7. Contact Information

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8. Partnerships

The project will be jointly implemented by AUNAP and MarViva, both are currently executing initiatives under the Fish for Development Programme, financed by the Norwegian Cooperation Agency for Development (Norad), which has expressed interest in continuing to support fisheries governance and sustainability efforts in Colombia. AUNAP, as part of the Ministry of Agriculture, will lead the political and technical coordination, ensuring alignment with national fisheries policy, while MarViva will support the activities coordination, budget execution, and provide scientific-based information and advocacy experience to strengthen results. Strategic partnerships will reinforce the project's objectives: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will be involved to provide technical advice and political advocacy expertise; the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) will contribute strategic communications and legislative advocacy to engage the Colombian Congress; the General Maritime Directorate (Dimar) will offer technical and scientific support; the Marine and Coastal Research Institute (Invemar) will provide research-based technical inputs; and the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO), through its National Committee on Illegal Fishing, will serve as a political advisor; multilateral organizations such as the World Bank will bring keynote expertise to the economy growth/marine conservation discussions. Direct participation of artisanal fishing community representatives from both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts will ensure the Agreement's implementation reflects local realities. Additional collaborations with academia, the fishing private sector, and NGOs will be developed during the project to strengthen the Category 2 proposal, embedding it within a broader national programme for the effective implementation of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

Budget Information

9. Total Amount of the Project Grant

USD 47

Key Elements of Implementation

10. Monitoring & Evaluation

The project's M&E system will be implemented by AUNAP and MarViva, ensuring timely data collection, validation, and reporting as follows: Activities • Engagement of qualified experts to assess Colombia's alignment with the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS) disciplines. • Organisation and delivery of the national workshop and follow-up meetings. • Drafting and validation of the First National Guiding Document. Data sources: expert ToRs and contracts, workshop agendas, attendance lists, meeting minutes, and draft/final documents. Outputs • Completion of a needs assessment report detailing Colombia's gaps in meeting AFS disciplines and options to address them. • Development of a project application for Category 2 funding, integrated with broader national implementation efforts. Verification: endorsed reports, stakeholder feedback forms, and submission records. Intermediate Outcome • Improved understanding among Colombian stakeholders (government, fishing sector, civil society) of AFS implementation gaps and feasible options to address them. Indicators: ≥80% of surveyed participants report better knowledge of AFS obligations; at least three concrete options for gap closure identified and documented. Data sources: pre/post-event surveys, meeting reports. Outcome • Colombia, as a grant recipient, is positioned to address identified gaps in implementing AFS disciplines—either through self-financing, national programmes, or newly secured funding via Category 2. Indicators: Category 2 proposal completed and submitted; evidence of integration of C1 results into national fisheries policy processes. Verification: proposal submission records, policy documents, official letters of endorsement. Reporting All indicators will be compiled into a results matrix consistent with the Fish Fund log frame. A final End-of-Project (EOP) report will summarise achievements, lessons learned, and recommendations, ensuring alignment with Fish Fund's outcome-level learning objectives.

11. Communication & Outreach

AUNAP and MarViva will implement a joint communication plan to ensure clear, consistent, and transparent messaging about the project, its objectives, and the support provided by the Fish Fund. AUNAP, as the national fisheries authority, will lead official communications with government institutions, the fishing sector, and relevant policy bodies, ensuring the project is formally positioned within Colombia's fisheries governance framework. All communications will acknowledge the financial and technical support from the Fish Fund in accordance with its visibility guidelines. MarViva will coordinate the design and execution of the project's communication strategy, leveraging its extensive experience in producing high-quality policy papers, managing communication events, and running outreach campaigns. This will include: • Development of policy briefs and technical summaries of the needs assessment and the First National Guiding Document, adapted for decision-makers and stakeholders. • Organisation of press releases, media briefings, and public events around key milestones such as the National Workshop and the presentation of results. • Dissemination of project updates and results via MarViva's and AUNAP's websites, social media channels, and newsletters, ensuring national and international reach. • Engagement of targeted audiences, including artisanal fishing communities, through accessible materials and regional-level meetings. The results of the project, including the National Guiding

Document, the workshop report, and complementary documents, will be made publicly available in digital format through AUNAP's and MarViva's online platforms, and shared directly with stakeholders via email, networks, and events. Key messages will also be incorporated into advocacy materials for the Colombian Congress, ministries, and development partners, supporting the transition to the Category 2 phase and broader national implementation of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.