



Market solutions for sustainable seafood

The Problem

Overfishing in small-scale fisheries (SSF) jeopardizes the livelihoods and wellbeing of many coastal communities, especially in the developing world. Due to the tragedy of the commons, fishermen are driven to overfish their SSF to or towards commercial invariability. For example, SSF in northwestern Mexico, including for the Verdillo (*Paralabrax nebulifer*) and Gulf Corvina (*Cynoscion othonopterus*) produce ever lower quality fish at ever higher volumes resulting in a vicious cycle of overfishing that is ecologically, economically and socially unstable. Governments and NGOs are collaborating with SSF to limit overfishing and improve management. However, while many of these measures augment ecological sustainability, they are often socially and economically expensive, jeopardizing medium and long-term viability, especially for fishermen.

Our Solution

SmartFish will be a social enterprise that rescues value in SSF to make them *profitably* sustainable by creating local and regional markets for sustainable seafood within developing nations. *SmartFish* market initiatives will complement sustainable fishery management practices, incentivizing management for fishermen and processors and serving as the missing link for sustainability from bait to plate. To do so, *SmartFish* will create:

- Supply: We will empower small-scale fishermen with better fishing, handling, processing and business practices that enable them to produce and differentiate higher quality, more sustainable seafood.
- Demand: We will increase demand for high quality seafood at local and regional levels that is branded, traced, and verified as sustainable.

Value Rescue in SSF

SmartFish will work exclusively with fisheries that are committed to fishing sustainability, preferably with a range of stakeholders including fishers, processors, and buyers, along with facilitating NGOs and government agencies. Our Value Rescue and Enhancement methodology will generate benefits for stakeholders at all levels of the supply chain.

For fishermen, *SmartFish* will rescue the value often lost to inefficiencies in their capture, processing, transport and sales of seafood, resulting in greater earnings for less catch. For fishers, NGOs and governments, *SmartFish* will rescue the value created through improved management measures such as marine reserves, individual quotas and TURFs, rewarding fishers for their sustainable practices. For consumers and buyers, *SmartFish* will orchestrate steady supplies of wild-caught, sustainable seafood from local and regional sources.

Success to date

SmartFish has successfully proven its Value Rescue methodology with the Verdillo fishery in BCS Mexico. *SmartFish* helped a group of artisanal fishermen plan, organize, incorporate and operate *ProMar Sustentable*, a SSF based in Bahía Magdalena BCS, with results including doubling ex-vessel prices, offering unprecedented employment for fishermen's wives, and providing regional buyers and consumers with more responsibly caught seafood. *SmartFish* is a spinoff of the Responsible Fisheries Program (ProPesca) of the Grupo Tortuguero, which has been working with SSF in northwest Mexico since 2001. As of January 2013, *SmartFish* has cultivated robust local and regional demand for sustainable seafood and has secured agreements to expand operations to additional fleets, with strong interest from NGOs and government agencies for replication.

Contact

Jimena Betancourt, MBA, Business Manager
Jimena@SmartFish.mx

Hoyt Peckham, PhD, Director
Hoyt@SmartFish.mx