



# REPORT ON SMALL GRANT PROJECT: BUILDING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN MONTSERRAT'S FISHERIES THROUGH CLIMATE-SMART PRACTICES AND STEWARDSHIP

*Climate Change Adaptation in the Fisheries of Anguilla And Montserrat*



# Contents

- Overview of the Climate Change Adaptation in the Fisheries of Anguilla and Montserrat Project
- Overview of small grants facility
- Overview of Montserrat fisherfolk organisations
- Issue addressed by grant
- Project aim and objectives
- Project activities
- Key outputs
- Challenges
- Lessons learned and recommendations

# Overview of the *Climate Change Adaptation in the Fisheries of Anguilla and Montserrat* Project

- The Climate Change Adaptation in the Fisheries of Anguilla and Montserrat project, which took place between April 2017 and March 2020, was funded by the Darwin Initiative through the United Kingdom. The main objective of the project was to mainstream climate change adaptation in fisheries governance and management using an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF).
- Project partners included the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources in Anguilla, the Fisheries and Governance Unit - Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Lands, Housing and Environment (MATLHE) in Montserrat and the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of the West Indies (UWI-CERMES).
- The four key outputs for the project were:
  - ❖ Assessments conducted to identify key vulnerabilities to climate change in the fisheries sector and priorities for institutional strengthening
  - ❖ Knowledge mobilised to catalyse changes in policy and practice for climate change adaptation in the fisheries sector
  - ❖ Climate change and climate variability mainstreamed in fisheries-related policies and plans
  - ❖ Capacity of fisherfolk and fisherfolk organisations strengthened to implement actions for climate change adaptation and ecosystem stewardship



## Overview of small grants facility

- In order to achieve output 4, CANARI implemented a US \$24,000 small grant facility which targeted fisherfolk organisations (FFOs) in Anguilla and Montserrat to undertake practical action projects on climate change adaptation and ecosystem stewardship.
- This facility was part of CANARI's Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF), a regional fund which supports civil society organisations and community enterprises to implement projects and actions addressing coastal and marine governance and management issues.
- The Montserrat Fishing and Boaters Association Inc. (MFBA) applied for and received US \$12,000 small grant from the facility for the project, "Building resilience to climate change in Montserrat's fisheries through climate-smart practices and stewardship". This was implemented in collaboration with the Montserrat Fisherman's Co-operative (MFC) from August 2019 to February 2020.
- This report summarises the activities, outputs, challenges and lessons from this small grant project.



## Overview of Montserrat fisherfolk organisations

### Montserrat Fishing and Boaters Association Inc. (MFBA)

- MFBA was the lead for the small grant project, with their president, Sheldon Carty, acting as the project lead and liaison for CANARI.
- The MFBA was established in 2010 to represent the interest of fishers and boaters with 25 members, 5 of which are executive members.

### Montserrat Fisherman's Co-operative (MFC)

- MFC was the co-implementor of the Montserrat project, supporting in proposal development and carrying out of project activities.
- The MFC was established in 1968 to give fisherfolk of Montserrat a collective voice, crate access to market, equipment and improve livelihoods. The group once had a membership of 60, which has decreased over the years, with approximately 20 members to date.

## Issue addressed by grant

- Since the eruption of the Soufrière Hills volcano in 1995, the fisheries sector in Montserrat has been diminished. Volcanic activity has damaged the nearshore marine environment, smothering shallow water reefs and affecting populations of reef fish- fish usually targeted by Montserratian fishers.
- Marine litter and pollution has further slowed the re-establishment of these nearshore ecosystems.
- In addition to the volcanic activity and pollution, climate change poses a new threat to fisheries and marine ecosystems and fisherfolk. More extreme weather, including storms and storm surges, rising ocean temperatures and ocean acidification has made nearshore habitats and marine life even more vulnerable.
- Fishers are experiencing a decline in their catch from these nearshore sources and now seek alternative sources of fish. Fishers are travelling further, targeting pelagic species, at greater expense and greater risk to their safety.
- More extreme weather, including storms and rough seas, also affects safety of fishers at sea and results in damage to boats and loss of fishing gear such as fish traps. 'Ghost fishing' occurs where lost traps continue to fish target and non-target species leading to mortality of species trapped in gear.
- Given these issues, the groups decided to focus their project on improving their fishing practices, making their gear and operation more sustainable through the piloting climate-smart solutions to two of their main types of fishing gear, including traps and fish aggregating devices (FADs), which allows them to reduce pressure on nearshore fish populations. They also focused on raising awareness on the issue of marine litter and pollution.



Building resilience to climate change in  
Montserrat's fisheries through climate-smart  
practices and stewardship in Montserrat

# Project aim and objectives

The small grant project was started on August 16<sup>th</sup> 2019 and ended on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The main goal and objectives of the project were:

To build resilience, promote sustainable livelihoods and conserve nearshore ecosystems by introducing climate-smart technology to Montserrat's fisheries and building awareness of climate change impacts.

1. To climate-smart two existing deep fish aggregating devices (FADs) and conduct consultations to inform the development of FAD management guidelines for Montserrat

2. To climate-smart at least 1-2 traps for each member of the fisherfolk organisations in Montserrat

3. To remove litter and reduce the level of land-based pollution of the nearshore marine environment

# Project activities

## Objective 1

- Pilot the climate-smarting of two (2) existing deep FADs through the use of GPS and solar technology and/or other climate-smarting solutions based on the FAD design in collaboration with the Fisheries and Ocean Governance Unit - MATLHE (see Annex 1)
- Conduct 2-3 consultations with fisherfolk on best practices for FAD management and to develop recommendations and inputs for FAD management guidelines in collaboration with the Fisheries and Ocean Governance Unit - MATLHE

## Objective 2

- Pilot the use of biodegradable rot cord and other modification to fish pots, for at least 1-2 fish traps per fisher (targeting approximately 25 fishers belonging to the two fisherfolk organisations) to address 'ghost fishing'.
- Train fishers in using GPS technology to locate fish traps and install marker buoys for traps climate-smarted.
- Raise awareness of 'ghost fishing' and other unsustainable fishing practices related to fish traps amongst fishers

## Objective 3

- Create a fishers against marine pollution campaign to engage with media, schools and other platforms in collaboration with other civil society organisations in Montserrat such as the Montserrat National Trust.
- Host and coordinate a 'clean-up' activity for shallow water reefs and beach in collaboration with other civil society organisations in Montserrat such as the Montserrat National Trust.
- Develop at least one communication product (e.g. radio jingle or photo story) to promote campaign and raise awareness on marine pollution and its effects on fisheries and other coastal-based livelihoods

## Key outputs achieved under objective 1

For objective 1, key outputs achieved were:

- One existing FAD was repaired and outfitted with a satlink buoy. The second FAD was unfortunately lost before modifications could be done to repair and climate-smart it, however MFBA has plans to raise funds to replace the lost FAD.
- Two fish finders were purchased and installed on MFBA members boats, to be utilised by all members for fishing and monitoring FADs and fish traps.
- Instead of consultations, a survey was done with fishers on the management and use of the FADs which can be utilised by the Fisheries and Oceans Governance Unit to inform the proposed management plan and guidelines for FAD fisheries in Montserrat.



## Key outputs achieved under objective 2

For objective 2, the following outputs were achieved:

- A total of 22 traps were outfitted with escape doors utilising the biodegradable rot cords- 1-2 traps for 12 fishers. Not all trap fishers were able to have their traps modified as most fishers usually built their traps during the Lenten period outside the project's timeframe. Remaining supplies of cord will be used to continue installing escape doors for the remaining fishers who expressed interest post-project.
- The groups were unable to host the training workshop, as planned, where fishers would have received training on use of GPS technology and educated on ghost fishing. They were still able to build some awareness of the issue, however, through educating fishers about the design and rationale for modifying their traps during installation of the escape doors.



## Key outputs achieved under objective 3

For objective 3, the following outputs were achieved:

- The group was able to create and maintain a public Facebook group sharing information about the project and activities carried out. This helped to build the profile of the project and awareness of how fisherfolk livelihoods are affected by marine litter and climate change.
- A beach clean up activity was held in November 2019 with members of both groups and their families. The clean-up was done over two days and 190 bags of garbage were removed from Margarita Bay.
- Lastly, a poster on the project and its key objectives, including photos of activities was designed and distributed around the island to be displayed at various locations frequented by fishers and the wider public.



# Challenges

The main challenges faced by the Montserrat FFOs implementing the project were:

- Lack of adequate support from some of the MFBA's executive and the general membership of the MFBA and MFC in carrying out project activities, with a few willing members bearing full responsibility for ensuring activities were carried out.
- Most of the fishers in MFBA and MFC, including the core team for the project, have full-time jobs. It was difficult to implement activities in timely fashion while working full-time and fishing.
- MFBA fell victim to online fraud at the start of the project, in purchasing two satlink buoys for outfitting the FADs. Ultimately, the group still had sufficient funds to complete the planned activities. However, this incident disheartened the core project team and it took awhile to recoup and refocus on other project activities.
- There was limited participation in project activities, such as the beach clean-up where fishers had invited all Montserrat fishers, other community groups and the wider public. Turnout was less than anticipated and meant that the impact in terms of outreach and awareness raising for the marine litter and pollution campaign was limited.

# Lessons learned and recommendations

Key lessons learned and recommendations for future projects include:

- The project has allowed the MFBA and MFC, particularly the executive, to see how much they are capable of achieving, given limited resources of time, capacity and funding, and they are now able to identify their strengths and weaknesses which they can improve and build on for future projects.
- MFBA and MFC were overly ambitious when designing the project and identified objectives and activities which were not necessarily attainable and within the capacity of the MFBA and MFC to execute. For future projects, objectives and activities should be more realistic and manageable by the FFOs.
- Ensuring effective participation and input from the executive and membership of the MFBA and MFC in proposal development and project management could have improved the project's impact. For future projects, greater effort is needed to involve members in proposal development and implementation of activities. This includes use of a local mobiliser to assist with mobilising fishers and engaging the wider public in implementation.
- The group did not adequately engage other Montserrat civil society organisations, who could have assisted in implementing specific project activities such as the marine litter and pollution campaign. For future projects, the FFOs need to identify and engage other relevant partners and leverage the resources and expertise they can provide.



For more information

please contact:

Dr. Ainka Granderson

Senior Technical Officer, CANARI

Tel: 868-638-6062; Email: [ainka@canari.org](mailto:ainka@canari.org)

or visit the project webpage at:

<https://canari.org/climate-change-adaptation-in-the-fisheries-of-anguilla-and-montserrat/>