CONTRIBUTION 4.1

Capacity building in fisheries - CRFM's Training and Capacity Building Activities: 2003-2023

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Abstract

In the two decades since the inauguration of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) on 27 March 2003, one of its core strategic objectives has been *capacity building and institutional strengthening*. As part of its efforts to achieve this strategic objective, the CRFM has been providing training opportunities in several fishery related disciplines through cooperative agreements with various regional and international academic institutions, through both degree programs and shorter-term training courses. Additionally, training and capacity building activities have been conducted as part of specific projects implemented by the CRFM. Over the twenty-year period, upwards of 1,650 training and capacity building opportunities have been made available to Caribbean nationals through formal cooperative arrangements and/or project-specific activities.

This paper presents an overview of the cooperative arrangements in place, background information on the annual/biennial training courses, and information on various training/ capacity building opportunities provided to the CRFM Member States. The information takes into account the related fishery disciplines offered, disaggregated by gender and beneficiary Member States.

KEYWORDS: Capacity building, training, fisheries

CITATION: Gibson, P.A., S. C. Grant and P. A. Murray, 2026. CRFM's Training and Capacity Building Activities: 2003-2023. Contribution 4.1, p279-287 *IN* CRFM, 2026. Papers presented at the CRFM 20th Anniversary Scientific Conference, 28-31 August 2023. Volume I: Technical Papers. CRFM Special Publication No. 37, CRFM Secretariat
https://www.crfm.int/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=921

1. INTRODUCTION

In the two decades since its inauguration on 27 March 2003, a core strategic objective of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) as articulated in respective Strategic Plans, (2003 – 2012) (2013 – 2021) and (2022- 2030) has been *capacity building and institutional strengthening*. The CRFM, as part of its efforts to achieve this strategic objective, has been providing training in several fishery related disciplines through formalized cooperative agreements with various international academic institutions. These agreements have facilitated both degree programs as well as shorter-term training courses. In addition, many Caribbean nationals operating in fisheries and related sectors have also benefitted from training and capacity building activities conducted as part of specific projects implemented by the CRFM.

Over the 20-year period 2003-2023, a total of 1,694 training and capacity building opportunities have been provided to the seventeen CRFM Member States, CRFM Secretariat staff and other countries and organizations. Among these, 260 opportunities were offered through the formal cooperative arrangements detailed in section 2 below and the remainder through projects implemented by the CRFM. Ocean governance, fisheries policy and planning, fisheries stock assessment, project cycle management, leadership, data collection and data improvement, fisheries law and management, sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures, fisheries prosecution and interdiction, value chain management, and gender are some of the areas of training provided.

All seventeen CRFM Member States have benefitted from the training opportunities provided with the top five beneficiary Member States being Saint Lucia (188), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (187), Suriname (160), Trinidad and Tobago (159), and Grenada (145). The UK overseas territories of Anguilla, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands benefitted from the fewest opportunities with scores of 12, 25 and 26 respectively (Figure 1).

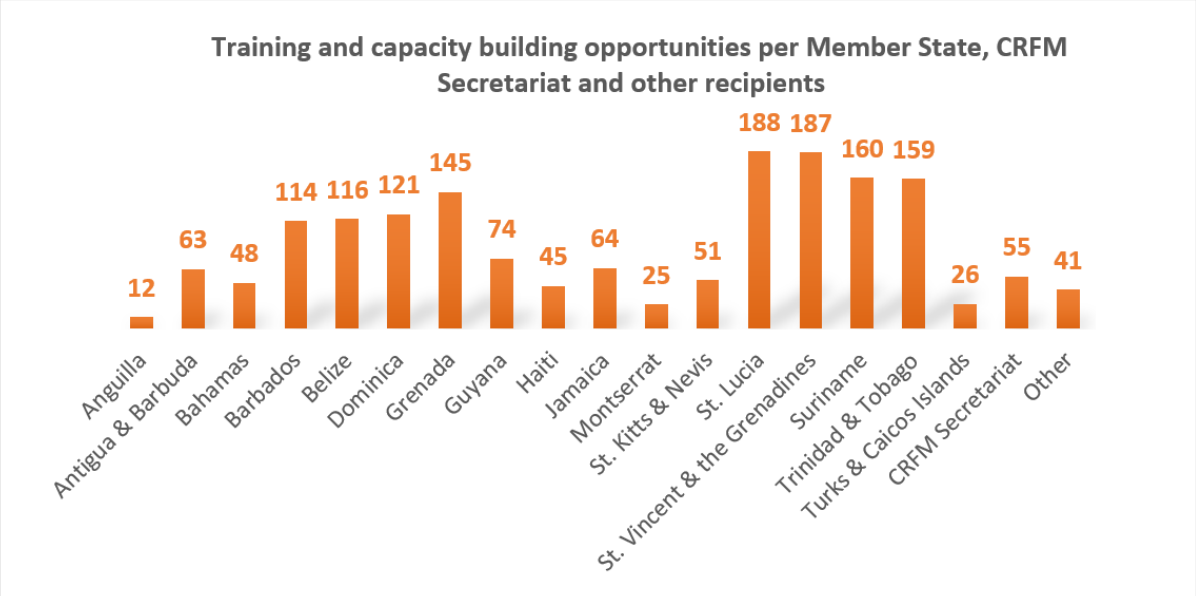

Figure 1. Number of training and capacity-building opportunities by Member State, CRFM Secretariat & other countries and organizations

Over the period, CRFM Secretariat staff have also taken up more than fifty training and capacity-building opportunities with the aim of ensuring that required skills and competencies reside at the Secretariat, so as to allow staff to better advise and support national fisheries authorities in achieving the shared vision of *'effective management, conservation and sustainable use of fisheries and aquaculture to maximise social and economic benefits in the CRFM Member States*'.

This paper seeks to give an overview of the cooperative arrangements in place, background information on the annual/biennial training course, and the number of training/capacity building opportunities provided through these arrangements, as well as through projects, with respect to the related fishery disciplines offered, disaggregated by gender and beneficiary Member States.

2. COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 UNESCO GRÓ FTP

CRFM developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme (UNU FTP, now the Fisheries Training Programme under the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO; hereinafter GRÓ FTP) in 2008. The objectives of this MoU have been renewed and broadened over time and it now facilitates up to 3 full 6-month fellowships per year. It also embodies cooperation in development and delivery of several customized short training courses in key disciplines such as leadership, project management, statistics and stock assessment, value chain management, and quality management of fish and seafood.

The aim of the 6-month program, which takes place between September and March in Iceland, is to strengthen the professional capacity of UNU FTP Fellows to actively contribute to the work done in their respective organizations and to recognize development potential in their home countries. The program comprises an introductory course, a specialization course, and a final project. In the introductory course, fellows are exposed to a holistic view of fisheries and gain insights into various disciplines within fisheries and their connectedness. Through a series of lectures, site visits and assignments, fellows develop a better understanding of fisheries. During the specialist training, fellows focus on one specific area of fisheries and hone their expertise through lectures, assignments, and site visits. Fellows also use this time to develop ideas for a final project in collaboration with their supervisors. In the final part of the 6-month training, fellows work closely with a supervisor to conduct research on an issue related to their work at home. They design and present a research proposal that combines the experience and practical skills developed in the introductory and specialist training and their personal goals. The research is then conducted individually through close collaboration with a supervisor.

From 2007 to 2023 thirty-five (13 male and 22 female) fisheries officers from CRFM Member States participated in the fellowship program (Figure 2A.). One participant of the 2016/17 cohort completed only the introductory course. The other thirty-four fisheries officers pursued specialized training in one of the following five areas - Stock Assessment, Fisheries Policy and Planning, Sustainable Aquaculture, Quality Management, and Company Management (Figure 2B.). The most frequently selected area of specialization was Stock Assessment (13), followed by Fisheries Policy and Planning (8), Sustainable Aquaculture (6), and Quality Management of Fish (6). So far, only one individual has specialized in the Management of Fishing Companies.

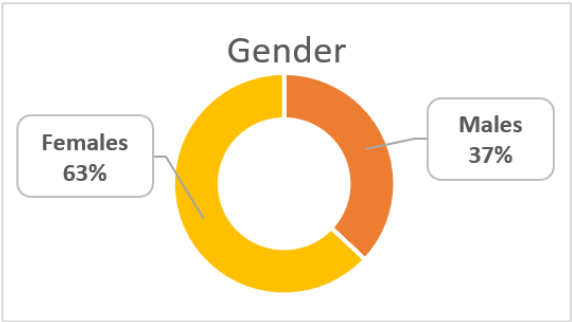

Figure 2A. Number of trainees by gender

Figure 2B. Number of trainees by area of specialization

2.2 International Ocean Institute

The CRFM has had a MoU with the International Ocean Institute, since 2005, for joint provision of training/capacity building in ocean governance in support of the Caribbean region. Cooperation activities under the CRFM-IOI MoU have focused particularly on facilitating participation of CRFM professionals in the IOI-Canada Training Program in Ocean Governance. The training opportunity is offered annually and accommodates between two and five candidates each time.

The Annual Training Course on Ocean Governance: Policy, Law and Management is offered each year for 8 weeks between May and July at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada. The course, which consists of over 200 hours of primarily classroom lectures, interactive discussions, exercises, field trips, and individual and group presentations, is specifically intended to benefit developing country mid-level career professionals who are responsible for some aspect of coastal or ocean governance. It is designed to give participants an understanding of the importance of the sea and the role of knowledge-based governance which aims to promote responsible stewardship and sustainable use of coastal and ocean resources. The course exposes participants to broad interdisciplinary subject matters presented in thematic modules including ocean sciences, law of the sea, management of resources, integrated coastal and ocean management and practical skill sessions that include areas such as negotiation, media, communications, and project planning.

From 2005 to 2022, 71 (34 male, 37 female) officers from Ministries responsible for fisheries, as well as other related Ministries with responsibility for ocean governance and management in CRFM Member States, have participated in this course (Figure 3A.). All seventeen CRFM Member States have had at least one officer participate in this course (Figure 3B).

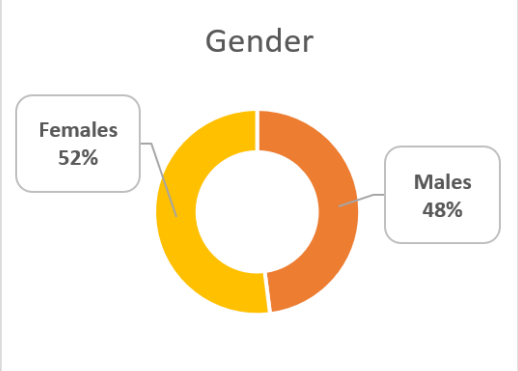

Figure 3A. Number of trainees by gender

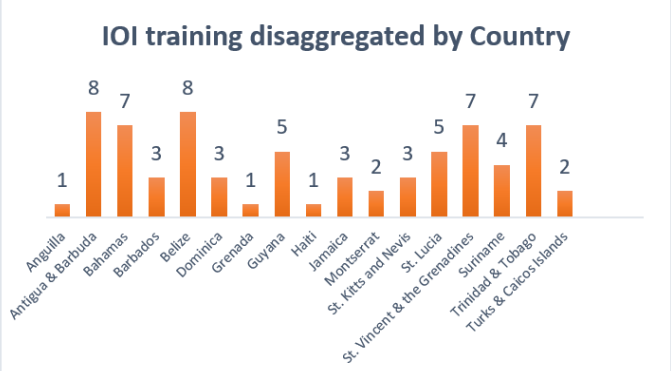

Figure 3B. Trainees disaggregated by CRFM Member State

2.3 University of Florida

A Cooperative Agreement between the University of Florida (UF) and the CRFM has been in place since 30 August 2011. The MoU between the CRFM and UF was extended for an additional 5 years in 2021. The primary objective of the Agreement has been the 'development of cooperative and synergistic efforts between UF and the CRFM, which will enhance the professional and academic interchange between the two institutions.' Activities undertaken in support of this cooperative agreement center on two themes: (1) sponsoring workforce development opportunities for fisheries professionals, and (2) supporting fisheries management.

The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Professional Development Program is a collaborative partnership between the State of Florida, the University of Florida Sea Grant College Program, the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) and the CRFM. The aim of the four-month training program is to promote greater collaboration, synergy and sharing of knowledge among organizations that have a stake in managing and promoting the sustainability of shared Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico fishery resources. Thirteen people (5 males and 8 females) (Figure 4A) from ten CRFM Member States (Figure 4B) have benefited from this training opportunity so far.

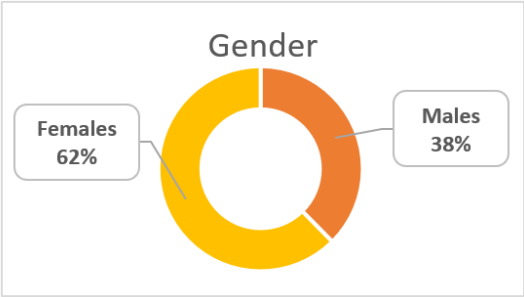

Figure 4A. Number of trainees by gender

Figure 4B. Number of trainees by Member State

Additionally, in 2020 an online Introductory Course in GIS using ArcGIS software was offered by the University of Florida in collaboration with GCFI. Three officers representing three CRFM Member States (Belize, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) completed the online course.

2.4 Australian Centre for Ocean Resources & Security (ANCORS)

The Fisheries Law and Management Training Course is supported by the AusAID's Australian Leadership Awards (ALA) Fellowships program and offered for a period of 4-5 weeks at the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security, Wollongong University. The overall objective of the program is to strengthen the capacity of senior fisheries personnel from CARICOM Member States in international fisheries law and fisheries management, including monitoring, control, and surveillance systems. The training course, which is delivered through a combination of lectures, small group sessions, and field trips, covers areas such as Law of the Sea; international fisheries law; international marine environmental law; fisheries and marine resource management, including monitoring, control and enforcement and the use of VMS; and negotiating regional fisheries instruments. It is envisaged that the knowledge and skills acquired from the training will result in improved frameworks and cooperative arrangements at the national and regional levels, aimed at achieving sustainable fisheries, and in turn, contribute to the social and economic development of Caribbean societies. The course has been offered

biennially in 2012, 2014 and 2016. A total of 49 officers, 34 males and 15 females (Figure 5A) from twelve Member States, the CRFM Secretariat and the Dominican Republic (Figure 5B), have benefitted from the training opportunity during 2012 to 2016.

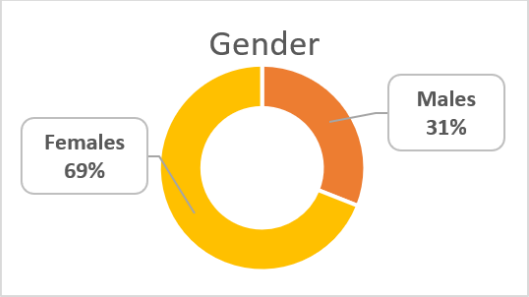

Figure 5A. Number of trainees by gender

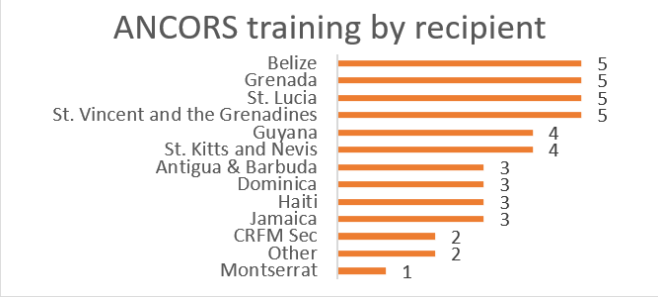

Figure 5B. Number of trainees by Member State, CRFM Sec. & Other

2.5 Regional Security System Annual Fisheries Prosecution and Interdiction Course

More recently, the CRFM Secretariat has been partnering with the Regional Security System (RSS) to deliver the Fisheries Prosecution and Interdiction Course (FPIC). The aim of FPIC is to heighten the awareness, enhance the skills and competencies of authorised officers who have Border Security responsibilities for enforcing the laws under the Fisheries Act, Fisheries Regulations and other supporting administrative policies. The course targets officers from CARICOM/CRFM Coast Guard (CG), Marine Police Units (MPUs); Fisheries Divisions (FDs); and other agencies with some measure of border protection or prosecution responsibility. The course is organized and executed by RSS, with coordination by the CRFM; course execution is supported by affiliate organizations. FPIC includes both theoretical and practical components, with the practical exercises designed to enable participants to develop the requisite skills for operating in real life scenarios. Participants were expected to be able to function in an operational environment and in accordance with best practices based on the material taught in the lectures and the Prosecution and Enforcement Manuals for CARIFORUM Member States. At the end of the course, students/officers have become knowledgeable about the correct procedures to follow while enforcing the laws under the Fisheries Act and Regulations of their respective countries. They also know how to prepare for Trial Proceedings, where offences are committed in violation of the Fisheries Laws. To date, 92 people (83 males and 9 females - Figure 6A) have received training through this course, 72 in person and an additional 20 via an on-line phase instituted in 2022. Twelve CRFM Member States have participated in the FPIC so far (Figure 6B).

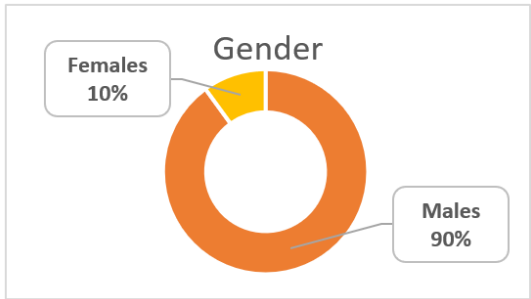

Figure 6A. Number of trainees by gender

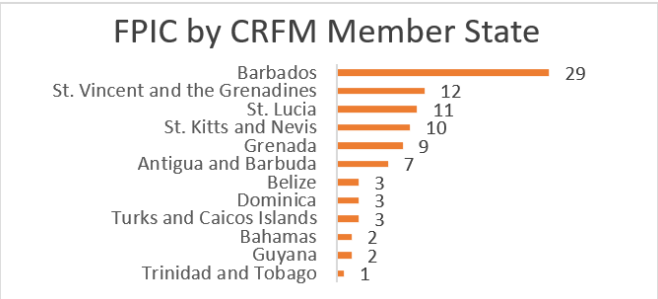

Figure 6B. Number of trainees disaggregated by Member State

3. PROJECT-SPECIFIC TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Apart from the formal training arrangements outlined above, during the 20-year period under review, the CRFM, in collaboration with various regional and international partners, has implemented a number of projects, including the ACP FISH II Project: Strengthening Fisheries Management in ACP States, CLME+ Project (Catalyzing Implementation of the SAP for the Sustainable Management of Shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean & North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem), Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR), 10th EDF and 11th EDF SPS Projects, and JICA/CRFM Master Plan Study, which included training and capacity-building components. Table 1 below provides details about the projects, the areas of training and the number of training opportunities disaggregated by gender.

Table 1. Project-specific training and capacity-building activities

Project	Areas of training	No. of opportunities		
		Total	Male	Female
ACP FISH II: Strengthening Fisheries Management in ACP States	Programme monitoring, Information and knowledge sharing for sustainable fisheries management, EAF and Climate change, Strengthening community-based fishing organizations, Financial management and cooperative leadership, Business planning and management, including ICT application, and Underwater survey techniques	335	238	97
10th EDF SPS Project	Fishery sector operations manuals and their applications; Fishery sector testing laboratory testing manuals and their applications; Fisheries SPS Management, and Antimicrobial Use & Antimicrobial Resistance (ARM) in agriculture	50	21	29
11th EDF SPS Project	SPS measures, food safety in the fisheries sector	163	79	84
CLME+ Project	Governance, socio-economic and ecological issues related to EAF and policy cycle, Gender mainstreaming in fisheries,	144	71	73
Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR)	Fisheries Early Warning and Emergency Response (FEWER) Application (Administrators & Users), and Analytical Tools and Monitoring Tools	134	107	27
CARICOM/CRFM/Kingdom of Spain Project: Diagnostic Study to Determine Poverty Levels in Fishing Communities in CARICOM	Survey methodology	26	14	12
CRFM/UNU-FTP Training Activities	Stock assessment and management, Leadership, Project Cycle Management, Value Chain Management.	134	92	42
JICA/CRFM Master Plan Study	Project cycle management, including problem analysis and planning; biological and catch and effort data collection	72	64	8
CRFM/CTA Project: Development of Caribbean network of fisherfolk organizations	Management, communication and advocacy; training of trainers to provide better Information, Advisory and Training Services to Primary and National Fisherfolk Organizations	51	37	14
Integrated Caribbean Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Development Project (ICRAFD)	Data collection, underwater survey method	39	33	6
CRFM Annual Scientific Meetings	Data cleaning, data analysis, statistical and basic analysis using the R software, stock assessment methods and stock assessment	192	97	95
CRFM/ICCAT Training activities	Data improvement, completion of ICCAT Task I and Task II statistical data forms	28	11	17
UNDP/Blue Justice Project	IUU fishing and organized crime in the fishing industry	53	38	15
		1,421	**902**	**519**

Every CRFM Member State (Fig. 7) has benefitted from the more than 1,400 training opportunities provided through these projects. Six Member States - Dominica (108), Grenada (129) Saint Lucia (162), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (157), Suriname (148) and Trinidad and Tobago (148) were beneficiaries of more than 100 project-sponsored training opportunities each.

Figure 7. Project-specific training and capacity-building activities disaggregated by recipients

4. OTHER AD HOC TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING EXERCISES

Fisheries personnel representing eight CRFM Member States and CRFM Secretariat staff have also benefitted from one-off short-term training and capacity building activities, such as UF-GCFI Introductory ArcGIS course; Data collection and analysis course (University of Wageningen); World Maritime University IUU Fishing Training Workshop; and "Innovative Collaboration for Development" online training course. A total of thirteen persons (7 males and 6 females) participated in these training exercises.

5. CONCLUSION

These training and capacity-building activities are contributing to the stated objectives of the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) of "promoting the sustainable development of fishing and aquaculture industries in the Caribbean region; building institutional capabilities *inter alia*, to conduct research, collect and analyse data, improve networking and collaboration among Participating Parties, formulate and implement policies and make decisions". Achieving these stated objectives will help in transforming the fisheries

sector towards being market-oriented, internationally-competitive and environmentally-sustainable, based on the highest international standards of quality assurance and sanitary and phytosanitary systems.

As national fisheries authorities look towards development of the blue economy, new areas of capacity building and training will be required. The CRFM will seek to maintain these established training and capacity building partnerships and foster new relations with training institutes to continue building the capacity of fisheries practitioners, fisherfolk and other stakeholders to ensure sustainable fisheries for our people in the region.