

COASTAL CURA. People and places
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Participatory approach to implement government programs: the case of the lobster fishery in Mexico






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OUTLINE

- The fishery context
- Challenges, aims, and government approach
- The steps for the approach
- Implementation
- Results and follow up
- Implications

The lobster fishery in Yucatan

- It contributes with about 33% of economic value at national level (*P. argus* and *P. interruptus*).
- Fishing season (July–February)
- Semi-industrial fleet - 26 boats (20-25 m; 100 alijos)
- Artisanal fleet- 525 boats (10-12 m)
- Fishing gears: Hookah and Traps
- Organizations: 17 SCPP; 1068 Fishermen
- Regulations: legal size, close season, fishing permits, area concessions, forbidden to catch gravid females.





Impact of environmental factors

- Destruction of natural habitats.
- Refuges for lobster affected.
- Biomass and catch reduction- Increase in decompression accidents (diving in deeper areas for longer periods).

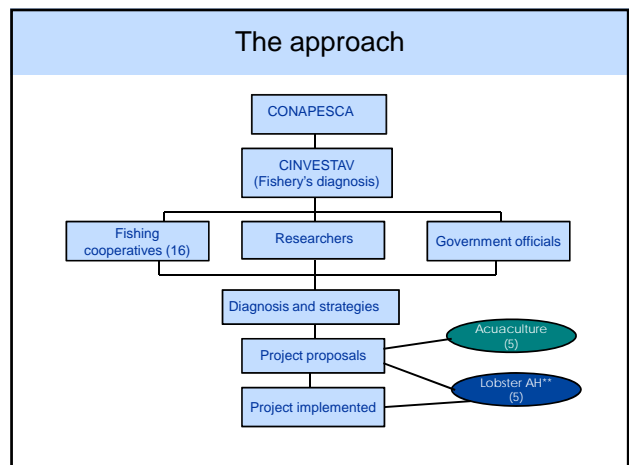
Market challenges

- Commercialization of the tail- limited market.
- Limited capacity for management of the product.
- Limited administrative skills.

Aims, challenges and government approach

Infraestructure	Improve reception centers infraestructure
Improve added value	Selective fishing and new markets
Improve skills	Building capacities
Responsible fisheries	Improve fisheries performance

Challenges: Habit for subsidies generated flaws in previous projects; low participation of fishers in projects; fishers were not used to contribute with concurrent funds; low level of organization of fishing groups.



Aims and steps

Project aims

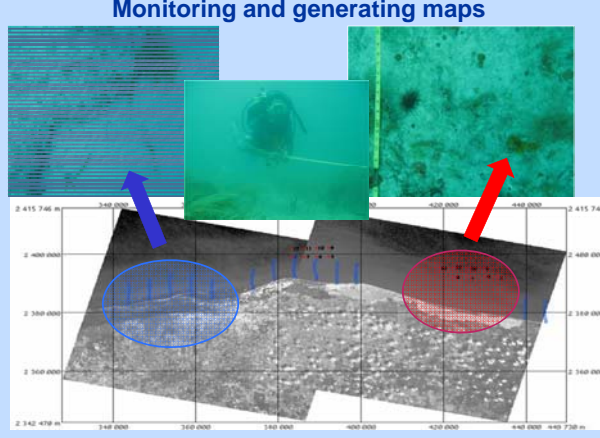
- To improve habitat conditions for lobster
- Widening market.
- To improve fishermen skills (fishing and administrative).

The steps

- Identify the better type of bottom to place artificial habitats- monitoring diving, interviews.
- Follow up of the placement and colonization.
- Recording of places where casitas were placed.
- Promote courses: selective fishing; diving skills, packing live lobster.

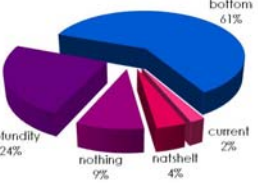


Monitoring and generating maps



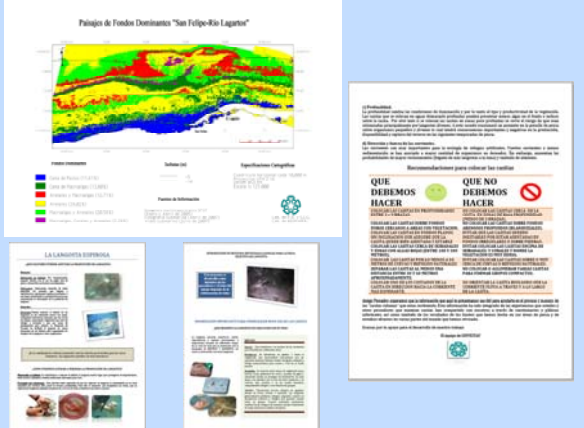
Interview results

Consistency between traditional and technical knowledge



- Hard bottom- best
- Avoid sandy areas
- Areas with low rate of sedimentation
- Place close to areas with vegetation
- Avoid direct strong currents
- Avoid shallow waters where juvenile occur

Palapas de Fondo Duritas "San Felipe-Río Lagartos"



Implementation


Communities

- Celestún
- San Felipe
- Río Lagartos
- El Cuyo


5 fishing cooperatives

1049 Fishermen


Construction



Introduction of casitas


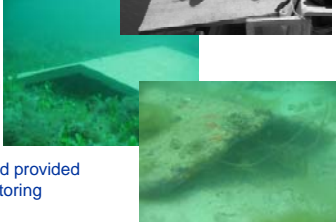


Training courses



Placing the casitas

Community	Casitas
Celestún	100
San Felipe	1000
Río Lagartos 1	1000
Río Lagartos 2	1000
El Cuyo	1000
Total	4100

Fishers covered the cost and provided exact location for monitoring

SCPP Nohoch Cuch (Celestun)

Before



After



Currently: The cooperative had generated new jobs in the community, had gotten funds for more projects, had increased their capital and had pay their debts.

Follow up

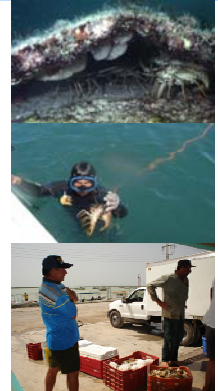
- Casitas were placed between 5 to 10 m as indicated, some casitas misplaced or broken.
- Colonization of casitas within three months.
- Bad year in 2006 low catches, but improved the next year- there is high variation in landings, but fishers indicated that the casitas can concentrate high amount of lobsters at the beginning of the season.
- Team members from community now generate their own projects.
- In Celestun cooperative members improved in several ways (infrastructure, economic performance, social organization).
- Lobster still sold as tail, searching for markets.
- Not control on diving habits- decompressions not totally under control.
- There was not a follow up on the trends of catches in casitas vs natural habitats

Factors that contributed to success to the program

- Fishers were involved since the beginning:
 - Participation in study for diagnosis
 - Participation in the generation of proposal
 - Participation in the study for mapping the bottom- community members were integrated as part of the research team
 - Contributed with money and time for implementation of the project
- Good organization of fishing cooperatives and high participation of its members in the project.
- Previous contact of researchers with fishers that generated trust.
- Government officials with open and supportive attitude.

Implications

- **Ecological**
Improved habitat conditions in the area facilitating lobster protection and increasing biomass.
- **Economic**
Allowed the maintenance of the lobster fishery (high value).
Improved conditions for the fishery (fishing ground and infrastructure).
- **Social**
Improved skills and the level of organization of groups, it also favored fishers' participation.



Thank you

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