

## **YSLME hosted study visit of Executive Director of Caribbean Regional Fishery Mechanism (IMTA) in Rongcheng of China**

From December 10-15, UNDP/GEF YSLME Phase II Project hosted a study visit of Mr. Milton Haughton, Executive Director of Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), and Mr. Courtney Cole, Chief Executive Officer of Fisheries Department of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica to Sanggou Bay of Rongcheng, Shandong Province of PR China with support from LME:Learn through IOC/UNESCO.

The visit is intended to provide an opportunity for Caribbean region to appreciate the implementation of the integrated multitrophic aquaculture as a good practice in the Yellow Sea to increase production and sales value from mariculture per unit area of the sea.

The visit was facilitated by Mr. Junwei WANG, General Manager of Rongcheng Chudao Aquatic Food Co. LTD, Mr. Jianguang FANG, Chair of the Regional Working Group of Sustainable Mariculture (RWG-M) of the YSLME II Project and Dr. Jinhui FANG from Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute (YSFRI).

During the four-day visit, Mr. Haughton and Mr. Cole were briefed the theory and practice in the development of IMTA in China, and visited the IMTA application in nearshore area in Sanggou Bay and a land-based IMTA operation in Haiyang, the two IMTA demonstration sites of YSLME II Project. On the last day of their visit, the mission visited Rongcheng Hongye Seafood Processing company with products destined for overseas market.

The visit ended up with a review meeting participated by Mr. Yinfeng GUO, Chief Technical Adviser and Manager of the YSLME II Project. The mission reflected positively to the study visit. In particular the following aspects were noted as significant as take-home experiences by CRFM mission:

- IMTA is a very good model for the Caribbean region and can be replicated under the context of limited resources to capture in the future, and the observed environmental degradation due to unsustainable mariculture and the aspiration of people of the region to take a blue economy approach towards development.
- IMTA application at large scale instead of small household mariculture stocked with a combination of low trophic level species and bivalves serving as fodder feeder species, secured by long-term access to sea use by mariculture developers and operators.
- Partnership between government, mariculture operators and scientific institutions is key. In particular the roles of the scientific institutions are significant to advise the local fishermen on the carrying capacity of the mariculture area, selection of species and stocking ratio.
- Innovation is needed to nurture a supply chain that can provide the hatchlings of species to be farmed, processing, market, awareness, institutional and technical capacity, and investment by private sector.

In terms of capacity development needs, the mission identified the following as generally lacking in the Caribbean for IMTA replication:

- The current mariculture in the Caribbean region is small in scale for subsistence and cash purposes only. Despite of the large areas of coastal areas, the mariculture is not competitive compared to other agricultural production sector.
- There is also a lack of technology to apply the IMTA in the long run. Haiti is the country which produces around 80 per cent of the mariculture production and developing the capacity of other countries requires assistance for more than one year.
- There is still a lack of regional policy framework for sustainable mariculture as a path to blue economy.
- Other limiting factors include the weak capacity at institutional and individual levels.

As a follow-up, the CRFM will consider to take the following actions:

- Raise the awareness of IMTA as a solution to blue economy development in Caribbean. The target audience would be the fishermen, private sector and the governments. To enable this to happen, capacity will be developed within the available resources and capacity of CRFM in line with a communication strategy.
- Host a Chinese mission in February to visit three countries in one week with the objectives of assessing/validating the feasibility of IMTA application, capacity needs, etc.
- Before and during the mission, prepare and sign MoU between CRFM, YSFRI and YSLME/UNOPS to specify the areas of cooperation, indicative activities and duration to enable the replication of IMTA in the region.
- Based on the mission inputs from the Chinese colleagues, prepare a twinning report with recommendations and present for discussion at the fishery ministers' meeting to be held in April 2020 in the Caribbean region. Meanwhile, a paper will be prepared to reach to the attention of the foreign ministers of the region on integration of the IMTA development under the framework of development assistance of the respective countries of the region.
- In the third phase of the CLME+ and other projects for funding by other sources to the region, make efforts to integrate IMTA in the CLME+ full project proposal of the FAO/GEF and other donor-funded projects on the basis of needs of the countries.
- At the request of the Barbados serving as the host of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, prepare a discussion paper on blue economy, where the IMTA will be mentioned as a good practice for consideration.
- Explore opportunities for integration for the technical assistance in IMTA under the overseas development assistance to the Caribbean region to the Chinese government. The existing assistance projects focus on infrastructure through the foreign affairs of each countries and targeted assistance to countries in need for IMTA replication will be explored through diplomatic channels.
- In order to develop the full capacity of the region in IMTA replication, make efforts to identify opportunities to enhance the capacity of the supply chain for mariculture development at appropriate scales. This entails the artificial breeding of the varieties, farming, market development, processing and packaging. Engagements of the private sector through joint venture is also integral to the capacity development in replicating IMTA in the region.