



# FISHING AND THE OCEAN ECONOMY

SUSTAINABILITY  
AND PROFITS AT  
OUR REACH

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**EDF**   
ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEFENSE FUND™  
DE MEXICO

Encontrando soluciones que funcionan

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**F**ISHING IS ONE OF THE MAIN ENGINES OF DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH within the new global trend of advancing the “blue economy.” This global trend aims to make the most of the goods and services provided by the ocean — from power generation to food production — using sustainable practices, for the benefit of 3 billion people who depend on the ocean for food and livelihoods around the world.

Mexico is one of the main seafood producers in the world; 2 million Mexicans depend directly or indirectly on fishing. However, overfishing, small added value, and illegal fishing have decreased Mexico’s competitiveness in comparison with the rest of the world. The current “volume rather than value” management approach, centered on fishing more and not on adding more value to whatever comes out of the ocean, is putting Mexico’s marine resources at risk, along with the livelihoods of millions.

In order to explore Mexico’s options for gaining more value from its fisheries, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) and Mexican researchers, such as Miguel Ángel Cisneros Mata, have conducted one of the most comprehensive analyses to date assessing the economic and biological benefits of shifting to a sustainable fisheries management system and combating illegal fishing.

This groundbreaking report gathers information from 28 of the most important Mexican fisheries — both by volume and value — to create a picture of the future of fishing in Mexico. If nothing is done and business continues as usual, fisheries in Mexico will be near collapse in 20 years, with profits plunging and catches dropping to half of what they are today.

But there is hope. Our findings show that the greatest gains come from establishing fishing rights, which end the desperate race to overfish by asking fishing communities to adhere to strict, science-based catch limits in exchange for a secure right to a share of the catch.

For instance, Mexico can increase the amount of fish in the water by 70% and harvests by 24% if it establishes secure fishing rights and combats illegal fishing. The study also shows that profits can increase by more than \$200M with sustainable fishing.

The options for the fishing sector in Mexico are clear and conclusive. Now is the time for Mexico to choose a new management approach that will support more fish in the water, more food on the plate and more prosperous communities. To achieve these goals, the report proposes four main changes to Mexico fishing practices and policies:

1. Replicate successes already evidenced in key fisheries by implementing rights based management in all fisheries interested in adopting this managing system.
2. Update the national legal framework for fisheries to support rights based management.
3. Modernize methods for managing fisheries to increase innovation and participation by those most affected.
4. Strengthen science to generate more relevant and updated data for fisheries management decision-making.

Mexico can and must be a global leader in sustainable fishing. Let’s work together to make a better future for Mexico’s oceans and people.



[Click here to consult the full report mexico.edf.org](http://mexico.edf.org) (spanish version only)