



## **Panama Launches its Journey Toward MSC Certification for White and Pink Shrimp Fisheries.**

**PANAMA CITY** — Panama is officially stepping onto the global stage of marine sustainability. In a groundbreaking move, the Panamanian Association of Shrimp Exporters (APECAM) has announced that the sector will pursue, through a Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP), the prestigious Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for its white and pink shrimp trawling fisheries.

This ambitious initiative marks a defining new chapter for Panama's seafood sector. It blends rigorous science, government backing, and industry-wide commitment to prove that commercial fishing can coexist in harmony with the environment.

---

### **An Alliance Born in Boston**

The seeds for this transformative project were planted earlier this year in Boston, at the North American Seafood Exposition. During the expo, APECAM held initial conversations with MSC representatives about the fishery's interest in the MSC program. This meeting set the wheels in motion.

To support a credible improvement process, a robust coalition of private, governmental, and non-profit organizations has united in taking these first steps:

- **APECAM (The Private Sector Force):** Led by APECAM President Roberto Chamorro and Vice President Jorge Azar (representing the majority of the shrimp trawling industry in Panamá). APECAM integrates the vast majority of Panama's shrimp trawling fleet, driving this project straight from the heart of the industry.
- **ARAP (The Government Anchor):** The Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama is the official state entity coordinating the entire project. It is led in this initiative by its Legal Director, Ignacio Noriega.
- **CeDePesca (The Expert NGO):** A FIPs and certifications specialized non-governmental organization represented by Executive Director Ernesto Godelman. CeDePesca brings massive credibility to the table, having successfully guided Argentina to its famous MSC certification for wild shrimps.

Since the initiative aims to prepare the fishery for a future independent assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard, the project will maintain communication with Francisco Vergara, MSC Fisheries Outreach Manager for Panama, to support understanding of the MSC program and its requirements.

---

## **The Two Core Goals: Market Value and Truth**

Panama's shrimp fishery is unique. It operates in one of the most natural, pristine, and well-preserved marine environments in the world. The initiative is built upon two vital pillars:

### **1. Elevating the Panama Brand**

Achieving MSC certification through an independent assessment could provide independent recognition of the fishery's performance against a global sustainability standard. Certification could support access to international markets that value verified sustainability, help differentiate the catch, and strengthen the international positioning of Panamanian seafood.

### **2. Aligning the fishery with the Ecosystem Approach**

Based on hard data, collected in situ, the fishery will demonstrate that is aligned with the best environmental practices established by the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing.

---

## **The Roadmap: Data, Transparency, and Livelihoods**

Sustainability cannot be proven overnight. Panama plans to launch a comprehensive Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) focused on transparent data collection and good management practices. The trawling fleet will voluntarily deploy independent onboard observers to gather solid, verifiable

data to feed robust management decisions. The goal of the FIP will be to demonstrate that the is not damaging the marine ecosystem, and manages the stocks responsibly.

Beyond the biology, this project is fundamentally about people. Shrimp is not just an industry; it is the primary source of coastal employment and the number one seafood export product in Panama. Thousands of families depend on [this](#) fishery.

By embarking on this journey, Panama will contribute another proof that a fishery can be a powerhouse for jobs, a driver of value-added national exports, and a friendly path for environmental sustainability.