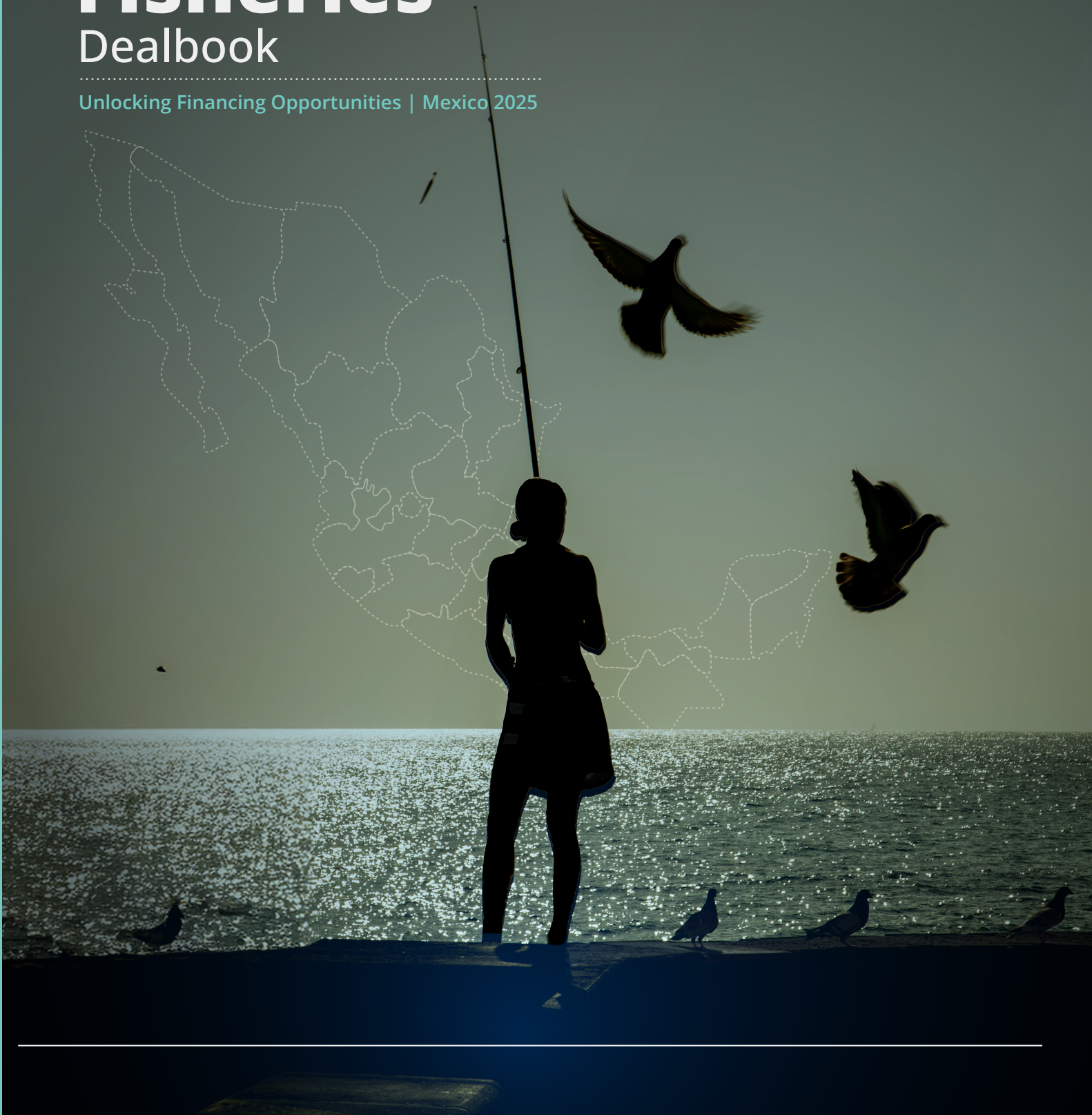
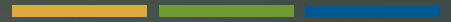


# The Sustainable Fisheries Dealbook

Unlocking Financing Opportunities | Mexico 2025

WALTON FAMILY  
FOUNDATION



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**The Walton Family Foundation** believes in working with the power of nature to reduce the impacts of climate change on rivers, oceans, and communities. For more than three decades, our Environment Program has sought to protect and restore marine ecosystems—recognizing that when nature prospers, people prosper too.

Although oceans are a source of food security for billions of people and a cornerstone of resilience in the face of climate change, the flow of capital into ocean-positive solutions has been limited. This has left a gap between philanthropy and impact investment, slowing the pace of change.

**This Dealbook is a step toward closing that gap.** Inside, you'll find **eight case studies** that showcase what's possible when entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and innovators reimagine the future of sustainable fisheries. Each example highlights organizations pioneering new models—including technology adoption, improved fisheries management, or market innovation—that deliver measurable environmental and social impact. Yet many of these impact-first organizations face a financing gap to expand their business plans. They no longer rely entirely on grant dollars but are not quite ready to receive investment at scale.

The Walton Family Foundation is committed to deploying flexible and patient capital to de-risk new ideas, strengthen project pipelines, and build demand for sustainable seafood. But we cannot do this alone. We invite our peers in philanthropy, impact-first investing, venture capital, and beyond to explore these cases as an opportunity to combine diverse forms of capital to scale the impact.

Together, we can advance a sustainable ocean economy that secures livelihoods, restores ecosystems, and generates positive returns.

*Thank you for joining us on this journey.*

*Maira McDonald*  
**Environment Program Director,  
Walton Family Foundation**

# Unlocking Systemic Impact Through Sustainability

## Sustainability is a Win-Win Across the Value Chain

Sustainable fisheries are not just an environmental imperative—they're a strategic advantage for every actor in the seafood value chain. Investing in sustainability yields stronger systems, better products, and more resilient communities.



### For Producers:

Sustainable practices help cooperatives secure **higher value for their catch and gain greater negotiating power**.

With technical support, training, and traceability systems, they can access premium markets and build long-term stability.



### For Distributors:

Sourcing from sustainable fisheries ensures more **reliable and traceable supply chains**.

This strengthens brand reputation, boosts consumer trust, and reduces exposure to regulatory or reputational risks, thereby enabling scalable business models.



### For Chefs and Consumers:

Chefs and buyers increasingly **value seafood that is responsibly sourced** given a higher value product, more diverse and improved taste attributes.

### For Ecosystem Enablers (NGOs, Government Agencies, Technical Partners):

Sustainability strengthens their role as ecosystem enablers by aligning with their mission to regenerate ecosystems, improve livelihoods, and enhance governance. It unlocks long-term impact, access to catalytic capital, inclusive decision-making, and credibility as leaders of systemic change.

If you wish to further explore the value of sustainability in Fisheries in Mexico, review our **full report: Systems Based Financing: Sustainable Fisheries in Mexico**



Scan to read full report

## How to Navigate the Dealbook

1.

Use tags at the top of each case to find aligned initiatives:

- SDGs: Global goals the initiative contributes to
- Verticals: Key themes (e.g., value chain, ocean health, tech)
- Type of Investment: Grants, Loans, Blended, Equity
- Type of Organization: NGO, startup, social enterprise



2.

Review each case, including:

- The initiative's story and current traction.
- Their impact potential.
- Strategic opportunity.
- Financing needs and proposed structure.
- Expected impact.



3.

Take action to support an initiative:

- Contact the initiative directly (listed in each profile).
- Schedule a follow-up with our team. Email





Capacity building, community empowerment, value chain improvements

Non-reimbursable financing  
Grants

Civil association

## An Initiative with Scaling Potential

SmartFish AC is a



civil association established in

**2013**

that aims to transform artisanal fisheries in Mexico through a proven approach. This approach improves incomes, strengthens fishing organizations, and reduces pressure on ecosystems.



- Their unique methodology is embodied in the **Value Rescue Model**, which creates tangible changes across the entire production chain—from fishing practices and community infrastructure to traceability, marketing, and negotiations with responsible markets—delivering immediate economic benefits and sustainable long-term results. In recent years, they have achieved measurable learning outcomes and successfully transferred knowledge to other organizations, mainly in northern Mexican states.

## Key activities of the organization:

- **Strengthening the technical and operational capacity of cooperatives**, including training in proper fishing practices, post-harvest handling, traceability, natural resource management, and regulatory compliance.
- **Organizational and financial support**, focusing on internal governance, planning, digital records, inventory management, and access to improved commercial opportunities.
- **Connecting responsible markets** through quality improvements, community infrastructure development, and relationships with buyers who prioritize sustainable and traceable fishery products.

## Sustainable Innovation: How it Catalyzes the Shift Towards Sustainability



*SmartFish AC adopts innovative and replicable practices:*

- **It integrates high-performance capture and post-capture management practices** to improve product quality and reduce waste and environmental impacts by understanding and implementing a sustainable value chain in the production phase.
- **It applies traceability technology that is accessible to cooperatives**, ensuring transparency and strengthening confidence in responsible markets.
- **It develops adequate community infrastructure**, highlighting the value of collection centers, processing plants, and cold storage systems, among others, which enable sustainable and higher-value operations.
- **It scales its impact through strategic alliances**, transferring its training and support methodologies to other training organizations to amplify the adoption of sustainable practices in more communities.

*SmartFish AC is redefining dynamics within the ecosystem:*

- **It transforms cooperatives into competitive social enterprises**, with traceability systems, better negotiating skills, solid governance, and a collective vision that allows them to operate transparently, access financing, and consolidate sustainable markets. On average, cooperatives that apply the model increase their income by 38%.
- **It strengthens the governance and internal capacities** of fishing organizations to ensure that technical improvements translate into sustained changes over time.
- **It generates market incentives for sustainability** by linking cooperatives with buyers who recognize and pay for traceable, low-impact products. This demonstrates that a more sustainable product translates into greater value for producers.



An Enhanced Reality Underway: What SmartFish AC Can Achieve

SmartFish AC is poised to scale its impact nationally, expanding its presence in new states—with a special focus on the Gulf of Mexico—to integrate climate change adaptation into cooperative operations and strengthen their productive resilience in the face of uncertain environmental scenarios.

The goal is to strengthen at least

25

cooperatives in six states



to double the national supply of sustainable, traceable, high-quality fish products, exceeding


200 tons per year.

With this growth, it seeks to increase the average income of cooperatives by more than 30%, consolidate competitive community businesses in preferential markets, and integrate climate adaptation into their operations to strengthen their resilience.

In addition, it aims to ensure that at least

40%

of direct beneficiaries are women



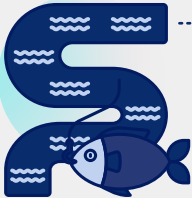
in key roles within cooperatives and value chains. Finally, it will scale up its Value Rescue Model by transferring it to regional partners capable of replicating it and expanding its impact beyond its direct presence.

Your Role as a Changemaker: How You Can Contribute to this New Reality

To expand its reach to more cooperatives, SmartFish AC, as an authorized donor, is seeking non-reimbursable funding to strengthen governance training and transfer methodologies to other organizations.



Would you like to join SmartFish AC in promoting value rescue models in fishing cooperatives?






**Potential funders:**  
Family offices, foundations focused on ocean preservation, blue economy, climate adaptation, inequality reduction, technical strengthening in value chains, among others.

**Other actors that can intervene:**

- Other organizations focused on sharing similar information and/or evaluating sustainability in cooperative practices.
- Regulatory entities that collaborate in financing training and workshops.
- Fishing intermediaries and marketers who adopt transparent, fair, and sustainable practices when negotiating with cooperatives and fishers.
- Startups and new technology solutions focused on the traceability of fishery products.

Your Return on Investment: Real Impact in Three Dimensions

If you support this initiative, your contribution to sustainability could look like this:

ENVIRONMENTAL 	ECONOMIC 	SOCIAL 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve monitoring and traceability data collection to enable control of fishing and resource management.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce waste, which currently accounts for near 30% of the catch.</li><li>• Diversify income by including new commercial species.</li><li>• Skills that enable fair and transparent negotiations, resulting in better prices per species.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote jobs throughout the value chain.</li><li>• Empower cooperatives and their leaders to make decisions with greater clarity and transparency.</li></ul>

# Marea Sostenible



- Political advocacy, gender equality, female empowerment.
- Non-reimbursable financing Grants
- Civil Association

## An Initiative with Scaling Potential

The National Network of Women in the Fishing Sector, Marea Sostenible AC, is the first network of fisherwomen in Mexico and focuses on understanding the context, achievements, challenges, and opportunities of women throughout the value chain. The civil association was created in 2023 and represents women in the sector before government agencies, focusing on raising awareness of the role and efforts of women in fishing communities to contribute to resilience in the face of climate change. It has already led the first National Meeting of Women in the Fishing Sector. In its vision, **"women in fisheries represent families, not just individuals."**

It has brought together



**33**  
women

from 11 of Mexico's  
17 fishing states,  
representing



**33**  
cooperatives

and **33**  
families



## Key activities of the organization:

*The activities that enable this vision to be achieved and are among the priorities of the Sustainable Tide Council:*



- **Connecting women leaders in Mexico's fishing sector**, including cooperative leaders, activists, and entrepreneurs, with products derived from fishing and/or considered waste from fishing activities. Leading activism focused on political advocacy to highlight the role of women in fisheries and promote access to their rights.
- Leading **activism focused on political advocacy** to highlight the role of women in fisheries and promote access to their rights.
- **Support sustainable business models** led by women, most of whom are in the circular economy.

## Sustainable Innovation: How it Catalyzes the Shift Towards Sustainability

*Marea Sostenible adopts innovative and replicable practices:*

- It raises awareness of the **role of women in Mexican fishing** by incorporating, for the first time, a gender perspective in the sector, which could be extended to other groups historically excluded from the sector and even from other activities.
- It supports women with **market-based business models** that have local reach, enabling them to scale up, access new markets, and monetize with the right skills and strategies.

*Marea Sostenible is redefining dynamics within the ecosystem:*

- It gives a voice to women in the ecosystem, helping to balance the dynamics of relationships with key decision-makers at the federal and national levels in Mexico.
- It empowers women to recognize the value of their contributions to the sector and to leverage the benefits of new, more stable sources of income, contributing to the resilience and financial independence of women and, in turn, families in communities.



## An Enhanced Reality Underway: What Marea Sostenible Can Achieve

- Marea Sostenible seeks to continue its advocacy work by expanding women's representation as it expands into Mexico's **17 fishing states**, scaling replicable production models with export potential, launching a membership system in 2026 to ensure organizational sustainability, and implementing a climate-resilience pilot program in coastal communities.



## Your Role as a Changemaker: How You Can Contribute to this New Reality

- Marea Sostenible is a certified beneficiary and receives **donations and grants** to expand its fieldwork, working directly with the network's women-led production models designed to add value by **incorporating sustainability** in fishing (sustainable fishing and processing techniques) and the **circular economy** (focus on resource reuse), which in a few years will be financially sustainable and even profitable.

### Would you like to join Marea Sostenible to raise awareness of women's role in the sector?



#### Potential funders:




Family offices, family and/or business foundations focused on gender equality, the circular economy, sustainability, and/or community development; multilateral entities; and local, national, and international governments, through donations and/or grants.

#### Other actors that can get involved:

- Incubators and accelerators with inclusive business development and/or social entrepreneurship programs in communities, leading entrepreneurial cohorts and/or training facilitators to replicate the model.
- Organizations focused on the design and strategic communication of Marea Sostenible's initiatives, strategy, and mission.
- Organizations or initiatives focused on disseminating circular economy strategies.

## Your Return on Investment: Real Impact in Three Dimensions

If you support this initiative, *your contribution to sustainability could look like this:*

ENVIRONMENTAL 	ECONOMIC 	SOCIAL 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increasing the dissemination of sustainable fishing practices to fishing communities.</li><li>Designing strategies with a focus on the circular economy for the design of production models.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strengthening production models with the potential to be financially sustainable (generating a future investment pipeline).</li><li>Increase income from fishing activities without overexploiting resources.</li><li>Reduce fishing waste through the use and utilization of parts of fish and shellfish (skin, scales, head, bones) considered waste for the production of products.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Improvement of working conditions for more coastal families represented by women fishers.</li><li>Recognition of the role of women in the fishing industry as leaders in these practices, gaining more visibility and prominence in their communities (INEGI data reports 17%, which could be 30% to 40% participation).</li><li>Empowerment of women and increased income-generating capacity in the fishing sector.</li></ul>



# National Program for the Strengthening of Fishing Organizations



Capacity building, community empowerment, education

Non-reimbursable financing  
Grants

Multi-stakeholder alliance

## An Initiative with Scaling Potential

The National Program for the Strengthening of Fishing Organizations (PNFOP, its acronym in Spanish) serves as an example of a **multi-stakeholder alliance** aiming to bridge critical gaps in the fishing sector. It is founded on the firm belief that strong cooperatives can lead to fully sustainable fishing. The initiative combines the academic expertise of Stanford University, the capacity-building resources of Niparajá, and the direct representation of fishermen and fisherwomen through CONMECOOP.

The PNFOP is establishing itself as the platform that will give cooperatives a central role in a sustainable and fair fishing model, focusing on the people behind the organizations. Over the past two years, it has **supported 12 cooperatives through two pilot projects across four states, reaching 985 fishermen/women.**

### Key activities of the organization:



- **Training lead trainers** in the fishing sector, responsible for sharing knowledge and training other fishermen, ensuring learning continues beyond the initial project.
- **Design and implement skills-building programs** for cooperative leaders nationwide, emphasizing leadership, strategic thinking, and cooperative governance.
- Coordinating **national fishermen's meetups**, bringing together up to 100 fishermen every three years.
- **Lead peer-to-peer knowledge and experience exchange** sessions between different cooperatives from various states across the country.

## Sustainable Innovation: How it Catalyzes the Shift Towards Sustainability

*The PNFOP adopts innovative and replicable practices:*

- **Sharing experiences and knowledge helps** fishermen/women recognize role models among their peers, supporting improvement and innovation in fisheries management.
- By emphasizing the skills of key individuals and decision-makers, the program supports the **shift toward sustainability**, enhancing governance, leadership, and implementation abilities for sustainable practices in cooperatives.

*The PNFOP is redefining dynamics within the ecosystem:*

- Each cooperative that develops skills in governance, transparency, and strategic planning becomes a more **resilient social enterprise** better **equipped to adapt to change**.
- The model emphasizes that **transformation must come from the fishermen/women** themselves to be effective and sustainable, underscoring the importance of empowering them as leaders in the sector.
- Empowering cooperatives allows the dynamics of the relationship with the government to be altered, moving from being purely recipients of benefits to **proactive leaders who build sustainable fisheries management** hand in hand with local and federal government entities.



## An Enhanced Reality Underway: What PNFOP Can Achieve

The PNFOP is poised to scale up its impact on the sector on several fronts, including:

- **Consolidation of the “From Fisherman/woman to Fisherman/woman” program:** Focused on training fisher leaders to train their peers, holding national meetings to share lessons learned and solutions, and promoting exchanges between fishing communities for the adoption of successful practices.
- **Implementation of regional thematic cohorts promoting fisheries management schemes:** Each cohort brings together 50-60 cooperatives, strengthens their technical and social capacities, and delivers action plans ready for implementation.
- **Design and management of a small grants fund:** a fund that supports cooperatives in the implementation of fisheries management zones in the field, including financial education and technical support to learn how to develop a project and incubate improvement initiatives with a direct impact on communities.



## Your Role as a Changemaker: How You Can Contribute to this New Reality

To boost the impact of the initiatives, the PNFOP is ready to accept donations and grants to fund program development, starting with USD 200,000 for the “From Fisherman/woman to Fisherman/woman” program in two payments: one for training trainers (a team of leading fishermen/women) and another for the national fishermen/women meeting.

**Would you like to support the National Program for Strengthening Fishing Organizations in empowering more fishermen as leaders in the sector?**






**Potential funders:**  
family offices and foundations focused on sustainability, oceans, and the blue economy; multilateral and international cooperation entities with programs focused on community governance and climate resilience; training programs focused on soft skills and leadership development.

- Other actors that can get involved:**
- Incubators and accelerators of social and circular economy enterprises that offer technical assistance and capacity building.
  - Technical and academic organizations that support training, governance, and monitoring.
  - Regulatory bodies and local authorities to validate and formalize Fishing Refuge Areas and sustainable management agreements.

## Your Return on Investment: Real Impact in Three Dimensions

If you support this initiative, *your contribution to sustainability could look like*

ENVIRONMENTAL 	ECONOMIC 	SOCIAL 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less overexploitation of oceans by providing cooperatives with tools to implement more Fishing Refuge Areas.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Higher income for cooperatives due to improved resource management skills and prioritization of sustainable projects.</li><li>• Strengthening of innovation and implementation of best practices as a result of peer-to-peer meetings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empowerment of fishermen/women as leaders in the sector with optimal leadership and governance skills.</li><li>• Greater resilience to climate change, given the development of skills in fishing cooperatives and, therefore, communities.</li></ul>



Technological base development, capacity building, e-learning, data processing

Non-reimbursable financing  
Equity/Vesting

Social enterprise model

## An Initiative with Scaling Potential

PescaData is a digital platform that operates as a SaaS (Software as a Service) that allows fishing cooperatives to record their catches and expenses. Created in 2018 as a spin-off of COBI and officially incorporated as SAPI in 2022,

it now connects more than **+3000 users** from **15 active cooperatives**.

It has recorded more than 9 million kilograms of catches. With PescaData, the industry can demonstrate, based on data, that sustainability can be measured and that it leads to profitability and transformation.

### Key activities of the organization:



- Operating a **freemium version** that enables fishermen to record catches and expenses in real time, determine the cost of their catches, and optimize resources through organizational dashboards showing actual operating costs.
- Promoting impactful tools like **e-learning courses on sustainability** and organization, as well as peer-to-peer community solution exchanges, to encourage learning and adaptability.

## Sustainable Innovation: How it Catalyzes the Shift Towards Sustainability

*PescaData adopts innovative and replicable practices:*

- It demonstrates the **value of data in small-scale fishing**. Being able to monitor the value of catches and process ecosystem data impacts efficiency and sustainability.
- It facilitates **real-time data collection** with tools designed around the user and their current practices.
- It allows cooperatives to **oversee their resources and make informed choices** through dashboards that provide tools to become genuine resource managers.

*PescaData is redefining dynamics within the ecosystem:*

- It opens the possibility of **knowledge exchange among peers** to develop better processes and practices across cooperatives in different states.
- It facilitates the **journey towards sustainability certification** and opens access to new sources of financing by generating business intelligence and standardized processes for income and expense management. This translates into compelling data for potential investors.

## An Enhanced Reality Underway: What PescaData Can Achieve

PescaData is convinced it can establish itself as the most widely used fisheries technology in Latin America, offering two-phase functionality and a more robust version with paid features. They aim to tap into the market of

**5,000**  
cooperatives  
in Mexico



and more than

**1,2**  
million  
fishermen



**in Latin  
America.**

They will do this in two phases:



- Phase 1:** Digital platform with **financial tools** for small businesses, a field-tested model, and an e-learning system on sustainability and cooperative management, designed from a social enterprise perspective.





**Phase 2: Solutions platform for the fishing industry**, with product catalogues that integrate sustainability metrics aligned with the SDGs and FAO guidelines, connections to microcredit, and mechanisms to measure their impact, as well as strategic market connections with suppliers in the sector.

With the launch of its freemium version, PescaData validated market needs and confirmed that one of the main challenges for cooperatives is decision-making on the cost efficiency of their catches. Currently, the company is focused on **converting active cooperatives to the paid version** and developing the first phase of this effort, incorporating new dashboards to strengthen informed decision-making.

## Your Role as a Changemaker: How You Can Contribute to this New Reality

PescaData is seeking funding in two tiers, one for each development phase.

For **phase 1**, it aims to raise up to **USD 300,000 through non-reimbursable resources** (501(c) available) and equity, allocated for three areas: (i) technological upgrades (advanced analytics, cooperative management tools, integrations); (ii) expanding the sales team focused on cooperatives; and (iii) boosting adoption through training.

For **phase 2**, starting in 2027, it plans to raise **USD 1 million in debt and equity** to support its expansion in Latin America and to launch its first microcredit program.

### Would you like to be part of this funding round?



#### Potential financiers:

Impact investment funds in SaaS technology, traceability, and the blue economy; family offices and foundations focused on marine conservation, food security, and reducing inequalities; multilateral agencies and international cooperation with digitization and fisheries governance programs; as well as venture philanthropy and blended finance schemes with patient capital for early stages.

#### Other actors that may be involved:

- Regulatory bodies and agencies that promote traceability, legality, and governance in the sector.
- Sectoral organizations that can open up responsible marketing channels and raise the profile of the platform..
- Environmental and sustainable fishing NGOs with experience in fisheries improvement programs, traceability, and technical support.
- Startups and technology providers that complement the functionality of PescaData.
- Environmental certification and consulting firms that validate, standardize, and audit impact and sustainability data.
- Financial partners such as New Ventures, which already acts as a catalyst for investment in the project.

## Your Return on Investment: Real Impact in Three Dimensions

If you support this initiative, *your contribution to sustainability could look like this:*

### ENVIRONMENTAL



- Contribution to transparency and traceability in the sector at the first link in the chain (catches).
- Improvements in monitoring of impact metrics with a clear connection to the SDGs.

### ECONÓMICO



- Higher incomes for cooperatives and communities.
- More efficient financial processes and structures through informed decision-making.

### SOCIAL



- Improvement in local governance practices.
- Democratization of access to information with processed data.
- Facilitation of the exchange of solutions between peers at the regional level.



Regenerative aquaculture,  
ecosystem restoration

Non-reimbursable financing  
Concessional debt / Carbon credits

Social enterprise model

## An Initiative with Scaling Potential

Semillas Marinas de la Baja was founded as a **science-driven social enterprise** focused on a macroalgae project in Ensenada, Baja California, led by a team of aquaculturists and biotechnology experts. The company aims to restore heavily degraded kelp forests and transform them into a driver of sustainable development for fishing cooperatives and the aquaculture industry.

The model involves selling seedlings and fresh seaweed, as well as offering technical advice on designing and implementing macroalgae farms, aiming to balance conservation, productive innovation, and economic growth. Successful plantings have already been completed at ---

**5** pilot sites in Baja California, covering ---

**600** mt of planting



and involving more than ---

**50** community members.



## Some key activities to realize its vision:



- **Production of kelp seedlings** in the laboratory to ensure planting material and enable one cultivation cycle per year in longline systems.
- Monitoring the growth of **cultivation lines at sea**.
- **Collection and commercialization** of the algae (kelp) biomass produced.

## Sustainable Innovation: How it Catalyzes the Shift Towards Sustainability

*El proyecto de macroalgas Combina restauración y regeneración de ecosistemas con modelos productivos de alto valor, y sienta un precedente de empresa social basada en ciencia.*



### *Semillas Marinas de la Baja adopts innovative and replicable practices:*

- It demonstrates how **science-based solutions** can become an engine for sustainable development by connecting academic research with the real needs of the fishing and aquaculture sector.
- It reflects that an **ecosystem approach** allows for connecting various links in the value chain through a social enterprise perspective, enabling financial sustainability and reducing dependence on external financiers.
- It connects the **regeneration of ecosystem services** with the commercialization of macroalgae.

### *Semillas Marinas de la Baja is redefining dynamics within the ecosystem:*

- The macroalgae project seeks to **regenerate ecosystems with high-value production** models and sets a precedent for science-based social enterprise.
- It empowers cooperatives in **ecosystem restoration** projects with clear production incentives, allowing sustainability to take root as a desirable practice for fisheries production.

## An Enhanced Reality Underway: What Semillas Marinas de la Baja Can Achieve

After successful validation in five territories, initially supported by COBI and the United Nations Blue Ocean Credits Program, the team is now ready to expand into more aquaculture industries and fishing cooperatives. They plan to increase operations by setting up a **fully equipped laboratory** capable of producing larger quantities of kelp seedlings for sale to cooperatives interested in reforesting their fishing areas. The company will also sell fresh kelp to meet the dietary needs of aquaculture species, primarily in abalone farms. In the next phase, they aim to **further develop these models to include seeds from other species** and expand into new regions both nationally and internationally.

## Your Role as a Changemaker: How You Can Contribute to this New Reality

To consolidate the seedling production laboratory and scale up planting, the project requires USD 272,000. This funding could come from a mix of grants and patient capital to support the initial phase, with the potential addition of blue carbon credits, leveraging kelp's role in CO<sub>2</sub> capture, deployed in two stages.



**Phase 1 (2025-2026):** 50% for the initial installation and equipment of a laboratory.



**Phase 2 (2026-2027):** 50%, focused on expanding production capacity and operational strengthening.

### Would you like to be part of this funding round?



#### Potential funders:




impact investment funds focused on blue foods, nature-based solutions, and climate resilience; family offices interested in marine biodiversity and community regeneration; and philanthropic organizations aligned with ecological restoration and climate change adaptation.

#### Other actors that may be involved:

- Environmental and fisheries authorities, key to enabling regenerative aquaculture regulations.
- Universities and research centers, partners for ecological monitoring and technology transfer.
- Certification bodies and traceability platforms that provide access to premium markets.
- Companies seeking sustainable macroalgae supply chains, including sectors such as cosmetics, functional foods, and biofertilizers.
- Sustainable tourism networks that can integrate kelp restoration as a regenerative attraction.

## Your Return on Investment: Real Impact in Three Dimensions

If you support this initiative, *your contribution to sustainability could look like this:*

ENVIRONMENTAL 	ECONOMIC 	SOCIAL 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regeneration of marine forests and CO<sub>2</sub> capture.</li><li>• Increase in habitats that support red sea urchins, abalone, sea cucumbers, and lobsters.</li><li>• Production of up to 6,500 kg of fresh biomass per cultivation line.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversification of income sources to reduce dependence on extractive fishing.</li><li>• Creation of direct and indirect jobs in fishing communities.</li><li>• Sale of seedlings to cooperatives and creation of new markets through the sale of fresh macroalgae.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contributes to food security and local access to marine products.</li><li>• Cooperatives are empowered by promoting responsibility for sustainable solutions.</li><li>• Training fishermen in restorative aquaculture and monitoring.</li></ul>



# Isla Natividad Divers and Fishermen Cooperative Society



Aquaculture, community development, inclusive governance

Debt

Social enterprise model

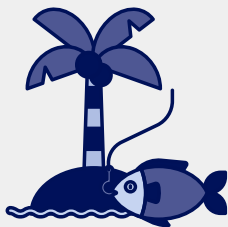
## An Initiative with Scaling Potential

In the Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve, the Isla Natividad Divers and Fishermen Cooperative Society (Buzos y Pescadores, in Spanish) has been promoting a unique community-based fisheries management model for more than thirty years. Renowned for its sustainable abalone and lobster fisheries, the cooperative is on track to become a leading force in abalone aquaculture in Mexico.

They currently operate an aquaculture laboratory that has been running as a commercial pilot project since 2010. The project has proven the technical feasibility of farming and restocking. It has produced commercial-sized



### Key activities of the organization:



- Marketing high-value sustainable products internationally.
- They have perfected **abalone aquaculture** techniques for the island's conditions, confirming their production through a pilot project that is prepared for expansion.
- They oversee research and development projects focused on sustainable production methods, such as designing and **testing artificial reefs**, to lower costs and boost productivity.

## Sustainable Innovation: How it Catalyzes the Shift Towards Sustainability



*Buzos y Pescadores adopts innovative and replicable practices:*

- They have made **sustainability a core element of the cooperative's production strategy**, encouraging research and development of alternatives to traditional extraction through ongoing monitoring of indicators that ensure biomass conservation.
- They respond to market challenges by using **adaptive management** and exploring alternative solutions to the high dependence on a single sales and production channel.

*Buzos y Pescadores is redefining dynamics within the ecosystem:*

- They pursue **strategic alliances**, even from their remote location, to collaborate with other cooperatives and reach more buyers.
- **They empower the local community** through technical knowledge, generating jobs for people who are not directly involved in fishing.
- They demonstrate that a self-managed cooperative can sustain itself through **sound governance practices**, generating real impact in their community and favorable income.

## An Enhanced Reality Underway: What Divers and Fishermen Can Achieve

The Cooperative is ready to overcome barriers to expanding access to water, energy, and cultivation and grow-out space, transitioning from a pilot project to steady, reliable production. Similarly, they will be able to enhance the efficiency of abalone cultivation along the island with artificial reefs. The project has the essential intangible tools for successful cultivation: **techniques, qualified personnel, food, and water quality to grow and develop a profitable operation.**

Over the next **5 years**, their main goal is to increase seed production and generate at least **498,000** abalone seeds annually. With consistent output, they will be able to secure commercial agreements and achieve medium-term production goals, diversifying their export markets.

## Your Role as a Changemaker: How You Can Contribute to this New Reality

The cooperative needs **USD 150,000** in financing over the next two years, via **debt** that can be repaid starting in the third year, with production secured for subsequent years. The funds will be used for:



Construction of a water intake to ensure continuous production



Securing alternative energy sources for the laboratory



Expansion and maintenance of areas for reproduction, growth, food production, and grow-out



Feasibility study of the potential for cultivation on artificial reefs to reduce production costs



Purchase of aeration equipment



Wages and salaries for community members who lead aquaculture

## Would you like to join Divers and Fishermen to promote abalone aquaculture on Natividad Island?



### Potential funders:

Impact investment funds in blue foods and regenerative aquaculture; family offices and foundations focused on marine conservation, food security, and climate adaptation; venture philanthropy and patient capital investors committed to sustainable community models and preferential concessional debt terms.

### Other actors that may be involved:

- International certifiers (European and Asian) for the processing plant and safety standards.
- Premium abalone buyers in the US, Europe, and Asia (restaurants, distributors) interested in traceable farmed abalone.
- Renewable energy suppliers for the transition to solar systems on the island.
- Universities and marine research centers for innovation in artificial reefs and grow-out techniques.
- Foundations and organizations that support capacity building and market access, such as COMEPESCA.

## Your Return on Investment: Real Impact in Three Dimensions

If you support this initiative, *your contribution to sustainability could look like this:*

### ENVIRONMENTAL



- Reduced fishing pressure on wild abalone of reproductive age, contributing to the improvement of natural abalone beds.
- Contribution to the adequate conditions of macroalgae (kelp) forests.
- Transition to clean energy, reducing emissions on the island.

### ECONOMIC

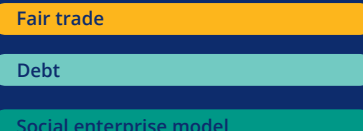


- Diversification of the cooperative's customers, including exports to new countries.
- Generation of new sources of income for 200 families that depend on the cooperative.
- Job creation for young people and women outside the extractive fishing sector.

### SOCIAL



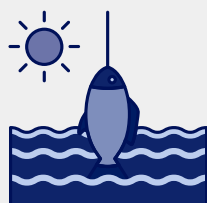
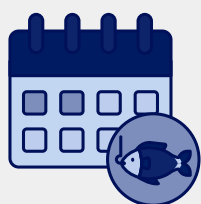
- Strengthening community governance and economic autonomy on Isla Natividad.
- Global recognition of the model as an example of community fishing transforming into restorative aquaculture.



## An Initiative with Scaling Potential

Nueve Palmas is a fair trade company that connects cooperatives and responsible aquaculture projects with high-end hotels and restaurants, bringing fresh fish and oysters to the luxury industry. For the past two years, it has been a **member of COMEPESCA and its Pesca con Futuro (Fishing with a Future) program**, which has strengthened its operation as a reliable intermediary, guaranteeing products of known origin that are monitored, of maximum freshness, and traded under fair conditions. Its purpose is to distribute products of responsible origin that comply with regulations, promote low-impact selective fishing and responsible aquaculture, offer premium quality that rescues the value of various species, and consolidate fair trade in both directions, with an environmentally endorsed portfolio.

### Key activities of the organization:



- **Direct marketing of fish and seafood** from seven regional cooperatives and five associated farms, all with sustainability certification. They have sold more than 280 tons of responsibly sourced fish and 400,000 oysters in six years.
- Fair negotiation with small-scale fishing communities, **where payment is made on the day of delivery**, without the average wait of 30-90 days typical of restaurants and hotels,

and at a value between



**50%** and **125%**  
above market prices, depending  
on species and season.

- **Development of the Baja Sustentable brand**, which processes and/or packages wild fish and shellfish from cooperatives on the Baja California peninsula.

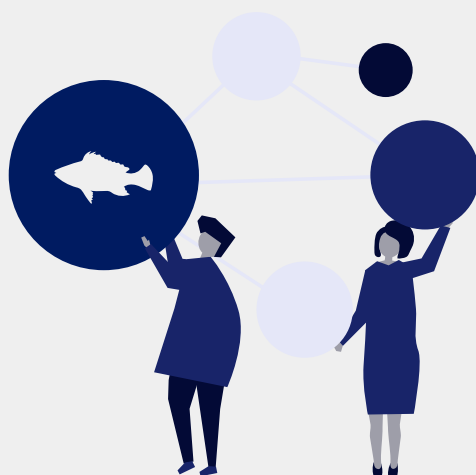
## Sustainable Innovation: How it Catalyzes the Shift Towards Sustainability

*Nueve Palmas adopts innovative and replicable practices:*

- They demonstrate that a business model that integrates **sustainability as a central part of the business** and supports it through strategic alliances can generate revenue that sustains the operation.

*Nueve Palmas is redefining dynamics within the ecosystem:*

- They demonstrate that **cooperatives and distributors can relate as peers**, allowing them to set the value of their products without imposing dynamics.
- They generate **better economic conditions for fishing communities**, reducing incentives for overexploitation of the sea.
- They collaborate with other organizations in the sector, demonstrating the power of **connecting different links** in the value chain.
- They redefine the rules of the game by **rebalancing the responsibility of sustainability** that for years fell on producers and recognizing the role that other actors in the chain must assume to ensure a real and shared impact.



## An Enhanced Reality Underway: What Nueve Palmas Can Achieve

Nueve Palmas plans to **quadruple its weekly production to 2,000 kilos** in the coming years and establish itself as a catalyst for change in the fishing industry. To achieve this, it has two parallel strategies:

- First, to **restructure its existing debt** with financial institutions, and second, to improve its working capital flow to boost its purchases.
- Second, to **adapt its processing plant** to generate value from fish purchased from cooperatives without processing plants, and thus, to certify the plant under international sustainability standards to meet the sales requirements of both domestic and international customers in different regions and the hospitality industry, with whom it is already in advanced talks.

## Your Role as a Changemaker: How You Can Contribute to this New Reality

- To ensure this expansion, Nueve Palmas is seeking

**USD 420,000**

(MXN 7.7 million)  
concessional debt  
financing,

allocated as follows:

**84%** to restructure its  
existing debt

**16%** to upgrade its  
processing plant.



### Would you like to join in financing Nueve Palmas' expansion process?



#### Potential financiers:

Impact investment funds in blue foods and food security, family offices, and lending facilities interested in logistics efficiency and sustainability.

#### Other actors that may be involved:

- Regulatory bodies that promote good practices in the marketing of fish.
- Organizations that promote sustainable species can advise hotels and restaurants on where to purchase products.
- Startups/new technology solutions that focus on species traceability.
- Organizations that validate and certify the sustainability of species processes (certification bodies and/or entities focused on this analysis, such as consulting firms).

## Your Return on Investment: Real Impact in Three Dimensions

If you support this initiative, *your contribution to sustainability could look like this:*

### ENVIRONMENTAL



- Sea overexploitation reduction.
- Increase in the commercialization of sustainable species.
- Better adaptation to climate change for fishing communities by allowing the marketing of non-traditional species.

### ECONOMIC



- Fair payment to fishing cooperatives.
- Creation of jobs in processing plants, mainly for women.

### SOCIAL



- Transformation of consumption patterns in hotels and restaurants, ensuring that only sustainable species are marketed (legal, traceable fishing, in season outside closed seasons).

# Comercializadora Smartfish



- Retail, logistics, fair trade
- Debt/Equity
- Social enterprise model

## An Initiative with Scaling Potential

SmartFish is a **social intermediary** that sells fish and seafood verified by third parties as sustainable. They source high-quality fish directly from small-scale fishing cooperatives (SSFs) and distribute it through their SmartFood stores and B2B channels. As a certified B-Corp, they are a leader in the sector, working with over nine cooperatives in Baja California Sur and Oaxaca, impacting more than 15,000 lives.

### Key activities of the organization:

Sales through three channels:



SmartFoods stores



Online sales



B2B and exports to the US

- Marketing **nationally sourced** seafood products with **sustainability certification**.
- Negotiate transparently with cooperatives, **disclaiming prices and costs at every stage** of the value chain.
- Offer fair prices (40%-400% above market value)** throughout all seasons.

## Sustainable Innovation: How it Catalyzes the Shift Towards Sustainability

*Smartfish adopts innovative and replicable practices:*

- It **increases the quality of seafood products** by improving handling, slaughter, and processing, which allows access to better markets.
- They are demonstrating that **fair and transparent intermediation** can be a lever for sustainability and gender equality, contributing to the creation of jobs for women.
- They have pioneered the **reduction of risk associated with seasonal price fluctuations** by establishing purchase agreements with fixed prices throughout the year, regardless of seasonality.

*Smartfish is redefining dynamics within the ecosystem:*

- It shows cooperatives how to **negotiate fairly** with distributors, where the value of the species is reflected in the value of sales.
- It is the **first socially responsible distributor** to access impact investment, demonstrating that it is possible to take risks and obtain returns, while opening up alternatives beyond traditional banking.

## An Enhanced Reality Underway: What SmartFish Can Achieve

Smartfish is poised to scale its impact through a comprehensive strategy that includes strengthening its **sales and marketing team**, focused on B2B sales and exports; developing infrastructure, with a **new processing plant** in La Paz, along with more than **15 reception centers** in coastal communities; and improving logistics and the cold chain. It seeks to partner with at least 15 new artisanal fishing cooperatives to increase sustainable supply and expand its store network with an initial opening in La Paz and up to **six new stores** starting in 2028.




The new chapter of Smartfish from 2026 to 2030 in metrics:



Your Role as a Changemaker: How You Can Contribute to this New Reality

To achieve this expansion, Smartfish requires a total investment of **USD 5 million**, structured as **USD 3.5 million in impact debt and USD 1.5 million in equity**. This investment will be distributed in three tranches: USD 1.5 million at the end of 2025, USD 2 million in 2026 in debt, and USD 1.5 million in 2027 in equity, in order to finance working capital, infrastructure, and the scaling of the B2B/export model.

Would you like to be part of this funding round?






**Potential financiers:**  
Impact investment funds that are in the food industry (blue foods), seek to reduce hunger, efficient logistics processes, family offices.

**Other actors that may be involved:**

- Regulatory bodies that promote good practices in the commercialization of fisheries
- Organizations that promote sustainable species can tell consumers where they can buy the products.
- Startups/new technology solutions that focus on species traceability.
- Organizations that validate and certify the sustainability of species processes (certification bodies and/or entities focused on this analysis, such as consulting firms).

Your Return on Investment: Real Impact in Three Dimensions

If you support this initiative, *your contribution to sustainability could look like this:*

ENVIRONMENTAL 	ECONÓMICO 	SOCIAL 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduction of overexploitation of the sea.</li><li>• 100% sustainable catalogues, including species unknown to consumers and not overexploited.</li><li>• Increase in the marketing of sustainable species.</li><li>• Adaptation to climate change for fishing communities, including the possibility of marketing non-"traditional" species.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fair payment above the conventional market rate to fishermen for species considered to be of "low value."</li><li>• Higher income for communities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Job creation (mainly for women) in processing plants and reception and collection centers.</li><li>• Improvement in governance practices, transparency, and supplier negotiations.</li></ul>

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