

## MULTI-FUNDER INITIATIVE

## Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSrf)

### Building successful fishing and aquaculture businesses in the Bolivian Amazon

Thousands of Bolivian families are working with universities, governments, civic organizations, and the private sector to demonstrate how much a market approach to fisheries and aquaculture can achieve. It can bring much-needed protein, healthy fatty acids, micronutrient—and prosperity—to many of South America's poorest and most food-insecure people.

### Exploiting the business potential of fish

Increasing the supply and consumption of farmed and wild fish—underdeveloped industries in Bolivia—is a priority for the national government. But this depends on having fishery and aquaculture enterprises that are sustainable, profitable, and equitable.

What works, researchers have found, is to provide family-based businesses with access to technical assistance—better hygiene and handling practices, for example—financial services, and supportive legal frameworks.

The approach is producing results—and creating new businesses. A pilot processing plant in one village is selling high-quality filleted fish and artisanal products made from skins and scales. A group of local women has also developed recipes that use the highly nutritious heads, abdominal meat, and skeletons that would normally be discarded in processing.

### Entrepreneurial approach key to sustainability

This project builds on that proven market approach by drawing on the expertise of the financial services industry to expand fisheries and aquaculture farms. Entrepreneurs, mostly women, will receive training in business planning, management, and marketing, as well as access to financial products specifically geared toward women.

Policymakers and legislators can also draw on evidence from this initiative to develop and test a new government plan to strengthen fisheries in Bolivia and neighbouring countries (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela).

### Expected outcomes

- Double aquaculture production (90% pacu, 10% other species) to 1,600 tonnes/year
- Double the production of the paiche fisheries (to 600 tonnes/year). Paiche is a highly productive but underutilized “superfood” in the Amazon
- Provide 10,000 entrepreneurs with access to microcredit, technology, and training
- Increase incomes for 2,200 families
- Increase annual per capita fish consumption by 20% in at least five municipalities
- Provide up to 400,000 consumers with new sources of high-quality fish
- Foster the emergence of at least 50 new private sector leaders and local entrepreneurs with a focus on women's leadership
- Inform a legal and coherent institutional framework that optimizes regional fisheries

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