



# Sustainable fishery

## Spreading the environmental message

The Heiploeg Group is Europe's largest shrimp processor. Their mission is to 'grow the market for shrimp by excelling at customer satisfaction, innovation and sustainability'. In the drive towards securing sustainable seafood, the group has actively supported and invested in the shrimp standard of Global Gap and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) route for brown shrimp and the Atlantic seabob shrimp.

Heiploeg has extensive Atlantic seabob shrimp fishing and processing operations in Suriname and Guyana. With two shrimp fishing fleets at sea in South America, Heiploeg is determined to see the introduction of sustainable fishing practices in the region. The company has therefore worked alongside scientists, the WWF, the governments of Suriname and Guyana and other shrimp fishermen, in order to implement MSC protocols. The Suriname Atlantic seabob is currently under MSC assessment thanks to these endeavours.

### Sustainable fishing practices: an important step forward

These developments in sustainable fishing demonstrate that governments in developing countries, even when hampered by limited resources, understand the need for ecological measures in order to preserve and develop key areas of the economy. Shrimp fishing is the fourth largest source of exports in both Suriname and Guyana. However, enforcing measures to keep the stock in good condition may involve reduction in catching effort and total catch. This results in lower income levels for fishermen and processors in the short term.

Consumers and retailers in the key markets need to be educated about the importance – and the consequent costs incurred – of genuinely sustainable shrimp fishing. Heiploeg has chosen a strategy of vigorously marketing the Atlantic seabob as a sustainable shrimp. The company can therefore recuperate some of the investments and higher costs of fishing by adopting premium pricing strategy in the market.

Fortunately, the seabob is a delicious shrimp: chefs love to use it in salads or cooked dishes, appreciating its bite and flavour. In America, the seabob is at the heart of the much-loved, breaded 'popcorn shrimp'. It means Heiploeg is able to appeal not only to the social consciences of

customers but also their taste buds, highlighting the superior flavour and 'the taste of the ocean' you can get from a seabob shrimp.

In this way, Heiploeg has recognised that the 'green agenda' and corporate social responsibility is the most effective form of marketing in these times. And the company intends to go further than sustainable shrimp fishing: improved terms allow Heiploeg to enhance working conditions, health and safety, fisherman and worker pay, management development for their fleets and plants in Guyana and Suriname. These investments will be strong evidence for retailers, analysts, investors and consumers that Heiploeg is striving to be an ethical corporate citizen, not only in Europe but also in South America and elsewhere in the world.



For the fishermen of Guyana and Suriname, this year's COP will be in close proximity. There is much to feel positive about. Concrete and measureable improvements are being made by these countries to sustain the marine resources upon which they are dependent. Their fishermen work according to a code of conduct which means attaching Turtle

Escape and By-catch reduction devices to their nets. They are trained in the protocols for endangered and vulnerable species, as well as improved waste management.

Government and WWF observations in Suriname last year indicated that no turtles were accidentally caught during seabob fishing. The By-catch reduction devices have resulted in 34 per cent less by-catch being caught by the Seabob fleet. Clear fishing limits have been agreed by the government with all the fleet owners and processors and tracking technology has been fitted into all the boats at sea in order to ensure that the fleets fish only in the agreed areas.

It is Heiploeg's firm intention to pass on this conservation ethos to the next generation by spreading the environmental message of sustainable fishing.

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