

**REPORT ON SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP OF THE
PROJECT: “EXPANSION OF DREDGING CAPACITIES, IMPROVEMENT OF
FACILITIES AND CONSTRUCTION OF DOCK 6”**

Background:

The consulting firm *Soluciones Ambientales Totales* (SAMBITO) invited the organizations UOPAO, *Unión de Organizaciones de Producción Pesquera Artesanal de El Oro* [Union of Artisanal Fishing Production Organizations of El Oro]; *Cooperativa de Producción Pesquera Artesanal Vikingos del Mar* [Vikingos del Mar Artisanal Fishing Production Cooperative]; *Asociación de Mujeres Artesanas Estero Porteño* [Estero Porteño Artisan Women Association]; *Organización Comunitaria de Servicios Turísticos La Playita* [Community Organization of Tourist Services La Playita], to participate in a Zoom Meeting on November 27 at 3:00 p.m., to learn about the public perception of the project: “EXPANSION OF DREDGING CAPABILITIES, IMPROVEMENT OF FACILITIES AND CONSTRUCTION OF DOCK 6”. There was a waiting time of 15 minutes, and the workshop began with the participation of the UOPAO chairperson.

The purpose and methodology of the workshop is indicated. It is explained that it is an inclusive participatory project with the social actors in the area; all the suggestions are considered. The purpose is to have first-hand information on advantages and disadvantages, if there are habitats of sensitive species in the area, what actors can contribute to the project, what aspects should be taken into account for citizen participation, the participation of women within organizations, how the project would positively impact activities and what we should take into account for plans so that there cannot be a negative impact.

The technical representative of Sambito makes a presentation of the project, so that the participants learn about the works in detail. (Maps and project areas are shown, including operations, dredging area, limits of the new dock 6).

The UOPAO chairperson says, “the advantage is development, and among the disadvantages, there have been no outreach programs as a fishing sector. Dredging produces mud and mollusks die. Shrimp fishermen have their nets full of mud instead of fish, and fish migrate due to decompensation and lack of oxygen. The water becomes cloudy. Jambelí’s peers obtained 1 quintal of shrimp before dredging and 10 lb after dredging. Due to dredging, there will be an environmental impact”.

The Vikingos del Mar chairperson says, “shrimp left and migrated to another area,” and they do not have the same catch. And they ask that situation be analyzed.

Yilport has not spread the advantages and disadvantages of studies, and they ask for outreach programs.

Mr. Lara (engineer) takes the floor to explain that a more detailed study will evaluate environmental and social risks since the financier is a multilateral organization that will support private projects. Yilport and the Port Authority have their environmental permits up to date. The financier asks that a detailed environmental and social management plan be created. That is why the first approach is being made in order to have a community development program that is real and includes the community's suggestions. The results will be outreached, and the study strengthened, and subsequently there will be a follow-up in all phases of the project.

The UOPAO chairperson takes the floor and shows an official letter sent by the Ecuadorian Navy, dated November 25, 2020, in which it is let know and asked that the restriction on fishing activities in the Santa Rosa channel be outreached, particularly from buoy 5 to 6, due to the daily transit of large merchant ships and vessels, which can cause accidents. They state that this is a disadvantage since the fishing area is limited, particularly for small boats that cannot go out to other places. The chairperson says that they are simply informed and must leave that area.

Mr. Damian Lara (engineer) says in relation to that thing that one of the issues is to establish an outreach plan, and to also collect complaints and claims of citizens in order to have agreements and move forward.

Ms. Sharon Castañeda (engineer) explains that this study will be inclusive and participatory with the support of grassroots organizations to identify the problems and solutions that can reach a consensus. As a consultant, we have the Ecuadorian Navy as a social actor, and it is important to know their perception and actions in this coastal area.

Continuing with the workshop, it is requested that the activities that these organizations carry out in the area be outreached, as well as what the participation of women is. The UOPAO chairperson replies that generally the work of women is related to shellfish gathering, but they also support fishing. The response of Ms. Brenda from *Cooperativa de Producción Pesquera Artesanal Vikingos del Mar* indicates that there are 3 women within the union, but she helps her husband in fishing tasks.

Ms. Sharon Castañeda indicates that collaboration in a couple is very important so that there can be equal work and gender equality.

She asks what the most sensitive species in the project area are. The UOPAO chairperson answers that if the soil is dredged, sediments are produced and mainly affect shrimp, and shrimp will migrate to another place due to lack of oxygen, and pathogenic bacteria will proliferate. Then the dredging will be filled with mud up to the shores, and shellfish die.

The chairperson indicates that they want to be informed on how these infrastructure works will affect the artisanal fishing sector.

Ms. Brenda says that what is affected is that shrimp gets "open", namely shrimp die because there is not anything to eat after dredging and, besides, vessels are small and cannot sail

more miles, then their fishing activities are limited. She points out that their engines are in the 30 HP range, and they do not have engines in the 75 Hp range to go fishing further. As a solution, she requests alternatives for those affected fishermen, such as farming projects.

Mr. Damian Lara asks, “how do the concession areas where these organizations work... how are they organized, and do they have work schedules?”

The UOPAO chairperson answers that there are concessions that start from the mangrove line inwards, but the impact reaches that area, and explains that there are peers who are dedicated to raise ‘*bajera*’ and ‘*prieta*’ (shellfish).

Ms. Brenda indicates that they have 321 hectares that were granted by the Government for conservation. She indicates that this is the advantage, but the disadvantage is that security rounds and ‘*mingas*’¹ must be carried out. Additionally, she indicates that within the “*Socio Manglar*” [Mangrove Member] program, the Government only chose 5 organizations in the area and later the Government did not include any more areas because the budget for that program of the MAAE (Ministry of the Environment and Water of Ecuador) ran out.

Regarding the legal registration of the organizations, the UOPAO chairperson indicates that the UOPAO members include gatherers, white fishermen, and tuna fishermen. All have legal status granted by the *Secretaría Popular y Solidaria* [People’s Solidarity Secretariat], and the MAAE carried out a training in revegetation for the concession area and mangroves, exploitation of resources and shrimp farms that are next to the mangroves. To monitor the area, fees are collected from the members of the organizations.

On this subject, they do have support from an NGO or foundation, says the UOPAO chairperson, they have a project with the NGO Heifer on processing of shellfish pulp that is carried out in the area of Las Huacas Island. There is no fish farming in estuaries.

On the subject of the most suitable mechanism for future meetings, Mr. Fabrizio Tapia (engineer) indicated that only Public Assemblies have been held for the presentation of the Environmental Impact Studies. The UOPAO chairperson indicated that they include organizations in the entire province of El Oro, made up of organizations from Puerto Hualtaco, Puerto Jelí, Machala, Baja Alto, and Puerto Bolívar. They have Ordinary Meetings 2 times a year, in June and December, and when something specific is needed, an extraordinary meeting is held to deal with that issue only. In addition, they have an administrative board that meet once a month.

The UOPAO chairperson states that they ask for alternatives for artisanal fishermen, productive projects: marketing and processing of product, giving added value to the product. The UOPAO chairperson also says that it is known that Yilport gives an incentive to Puerto Bolívar for production development projects.

¹ Translator’s note: ‘Minga’ is an indigenous tradition of cooperative and voluntary work for the common good.

Cooperativa Vikingos del Mar have meetings every 3 months, but for something urgent they have an extraordinary meeting. They ask for a rural insurance or health subcenter.

Ms. Lara replies and explains that precisely these workshops are to get to know the concerns and take them to the proponent of the project, i.e., Yilport, and viable proposals will be taken into account in the Plan of Environmental and Social Management.

The role of the consultant is to collect concerns and create approach with the stakeholders involved.

The UOPAO chairperson insists that they should be provided with a land with a cold chamber, freezer, chamber with freezer, chamber for processing of shellfish pulp, crab, vacuum packaging, sealing machine, to give a value added to the product and it is profitable for fishermen, where the product arrives and keep track of or monitor fish processing.

Their participation in the meeting is appreciated and it is explained that an inclusive, participatory study will be carried out with the suggestion of the grassroots organization, with a spirit of having open doors to collaborate and continue the process together with them, and that they can inform their organizations on the topics discussed in this workshop.

