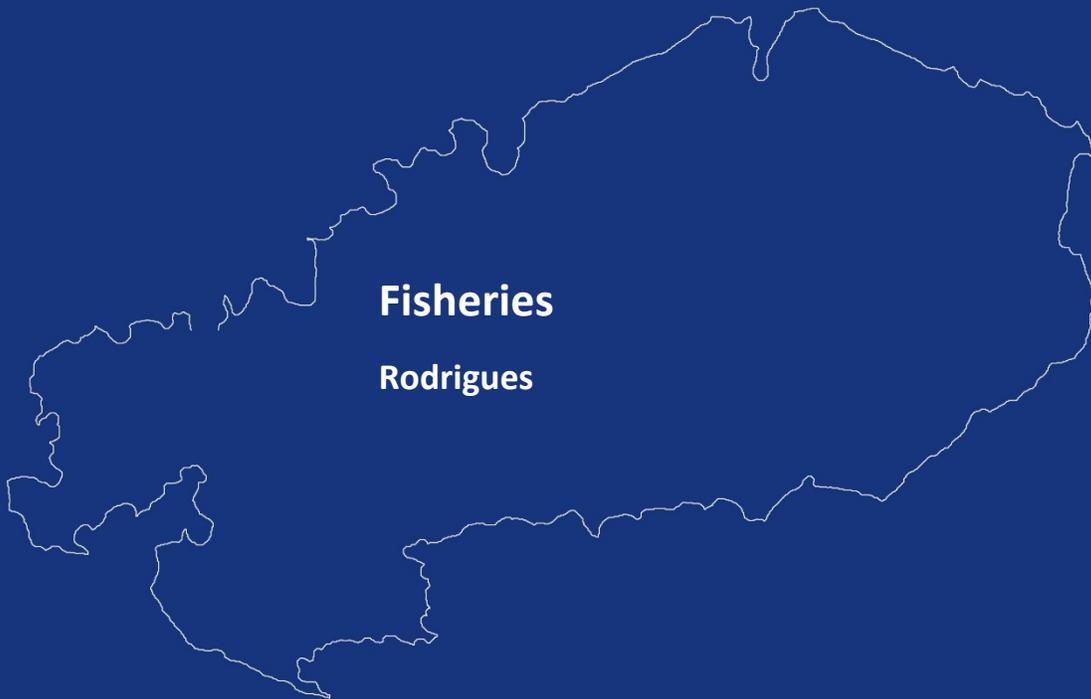




Board of Investment
Mauritius



Fisheries

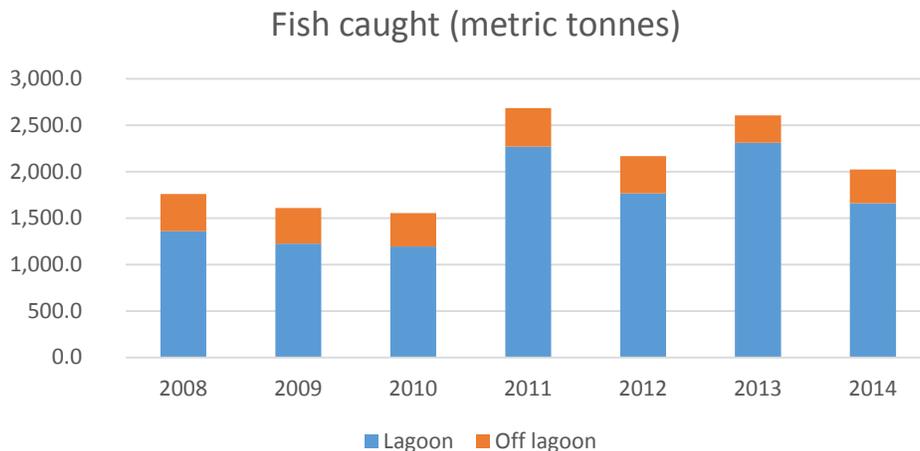
Rodrigues

Fisheries

Rodrigues is totally encircled by reef with wide shallow flats extending out up to 10 km in some areas. The lagoon area has been estimated at 240 km². The fisheries sector remains an important economic activity for Rodrigues. In 2014, there was a total of 1,221 registered fishermen, including 190 professional fisherwomen. However, as per information available since 2008, this number has been decreasing yearly.

In contrast, however the number of registered fishing boats during the same period has been increasing yearly – 1,973 fishing boats had been registered. One possible explanation for this dichotomy is that the more registered fishermen have become owners of fishing boats. Nonetheless, the number of registered fishing boats by far exceed the number of registered fishermen.

Since 2012, regulations have been passed (Octopus Closed Season Regulations 2012) have been passed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to compulsory stop octopus fishing for 2 months from mid-August to mid-October. The outcome has been positive as for the year 2012 the volume of octopus caught increased significantly to 570.7 tonnes – an increase of 49% over the previous year.



2,225 tonnes of fish was caught in 2014, in line with the average production over the last few years. Around a quarter of this represented octopus fishing. The sector is traditionally considered as one of the major economic activities of the island, and represents a substantial part of exports, with 6,600 Kgs of dry octopus and 185 tonnes of frozen octopus exported to Mauritius in 2014.

The sector is expected to undergo major advances to build upon its solid bases and know-how to play a pivotal role in the development of Rodrigues as well as Mauritius with the new Ocean economy strategy.

Opportunities

The Ocean Development and Seafood Sector encompasses two key activities which is **Seaweed Farming** and **Aquaculture**. In view of the tremendous potentials that exist in Rodrigues, the RRA is encouraging the development of these activities.

- **Seaweed Farming**

Experimental seaweed culture carried out by the MRC has shown a healthy growth rate supported by the natural characteristics of the site including, quality of the lagoon water and its nutrient content, water temperature, dissolved oxygen content and salinity of the water among other.

Culture methods adapted to low tides are being investigated for Rodrigues. MRC, BOI and other institutions are working with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to facilitate seaweed projects in Rodrigues.

Eligibility Criteria for Seaweed Farming:

The concept of Seaweed cultivation is subject to the following criteria:

- (i) Seaweed species concerned should be local (indigenous or endemic);
- (ii) It has to be done in shallow water (0.5m);
- (iii) It should be done on a sandy substrate to avoid destruction of coral ecosystem;
- (iv) No introduction of new species into the Rodriguan waters.

Sites identified for seaweed farming

Areas have been identified within the parameters of “Rodrigues Ecologique” where seaweed farming could be developed.

- **Aquaculture (Barramundi, Mud Crab, Cordonnier)**

Aquaculture has also been identified as one of the key activities having a potential to boost economic growth of the island. Farming of local species of sea cucumber and the “conocono” is highly encouraged. The culture of “cordonnier” farming and inland aquaculture for shrimps will help build Rodrigues’ aquatic flora and fauna.

Barramundi (LatesCalcarifier)

Barramundi has many attributes which makes it an ideal candidate for aquaculture in Rodrigues. These attributes include its relative strength to tolerate high densities and its wide physiological tolerances, the high fecundity of the female fish providing plenty of material for hatchery production of seed, simplicity of hatchery production of seed, its ability to feed well on pelleted diets and ease of juveniles to wean pellets and the rapid growth of the species, reaching a harvestable size in six months to two years.

Barramundi will be reared for exportation towards niche markets. It is proposed to conduct the rearing of barramundi through Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) as it best suits the species.

Mud Crab (Scylla Serrata)

Mud crabs have a good growth and can be reared in a sustainable way as well as in apolyculture system. The Extreme Density Unit Cells (EDU) technique has been developed to enable the rearing of mud crab at high densities while avoiding cannibalism. The implementation of EDU cells in a RAS greatly reduces land and water requirements while being sustainable and will therefore have no negative impacts on the environment. This technique is being proposed for rearing of mud crab in Rodrigues.

Cordonnier (SiganusSutor)

The extended lagoon of Rodrigues is ideal for cage culture of Cordonnier. The development of sustainable eco-friendly cage culture holds considerable prospect for satisfying the local needs and for regional export in a short term period. Its implementation will help to build Rodrigues' aquatic environment.

Eligibility Criteria:

The practice of aquaculture will be allowed subject to the following criteria:

- (v) Species involved should be naturally fed without having recourse to man-made feed. In other words, the use of any artificial food for the production should be avoided due to restrictions about the flushing capacity within the lagoon;
- (vi) No introduction of new species into the Rodriguan waters;
- (vii) Farming of cordonnier should be done in closed barachois (they will be released periodically in the lagoon to replenish fish stock);

- **Seafood Processing**

The fisheries sector of Rodrigues is a major source of export earnings with an annual export of approximately 145 Mt of frozen octopus to Mauritius. Octopus is the star product in terms of processing and value added activities. There is tremendous scope for product and market development in this segment. On-going development of value added activities in the seafood processing sector also includes processing of -40 degrees sashimi grade tuna and better fish oil and fish meal.