

SOS Final Technical Report

1. Project Information

Organization:	World Wildlife Fund Inc.
Project Title:	Saving vaquita from extinction through effective and permanent gear swaps
Grant code:	2012A-042
SOS Grant Type:	Threatened Species Grant
Report Author and Contact Information:	Enrique Sanjurjo Rivera, WWF-Mexico esanjurjo@wwfmex.org
Date of Report:	June 30, 2015

SOS Strategic Direction(s):	Threatened small marine mammals
Project Dates	01 May 2013 – 30 April 2015
SOS Grant Amount (in US\$):	195,140
Total Project Amount (in US\$):	398,668
Focal Threatened Species:	Vaquita (<i>Phocoena sinus</i>), Critically Endangered
Implementation Partners for this project:	Pronatura Noroeste A.C. Intercultural Center for Deserts and Oceans, CEDO A.C.

2. Project Progress by Objectives / Results

2A. Report on Objectives and Results. Reporting should state if Objectives and Results have been “ACHIEVED”, “PARTIALLY ACHIEVED” or are still “IN PROGRESS”. Please reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information including quantitative and qualitative measurement of chosen indicators.

Objective or Result	Actual at Completion
Objective 1: By December 2014, 50 fishers are using “vaquita safe” fishing gears and techniques, and are an example to other fishers in San Felipe	PARTIALLY ACHIEVED – The number of users of the alternative gear is 32; this group has been also participative in data generation. The results produced by this case influenced government decisions, and inclined other fishermen to participate. For the 2015-16 fishing season there are 30 additional fishermen willing to participate with WWF.
Result 1.1: During the 2013 finfish season (March – July) a group of 15	ACHIEVED – 15 fishermen (8 for long lines and 7 for traps) used alternative gear for finfish. Last time we reported 12

<p>fishers are using alternative gear for finfish and are acquiring the skills necessary to use them in a more profitable way.</p>	<p>fishermen; for this season added three more.</p> <p>In 2014 we reported great success in the use of longlines with good captures and no by catch of vaquita, totoaba or sea turtles. In 2015 Government suspended the use of long lines due to their potential use for totoaba fisheries.</p> <p>In 2014 we reported that traps were not having the expected performance, in terms of catches. After the suspension of gillnets, we started testing traps again; and under this new conditions traps are showing very promising results.</p>
<p>Result 1.2: During the 2013-14 shrimp season (September 2013 – March 2014), 17 skilled fishers are using the new Selective Net RS-INP-MX for shrimp and are demonstrating its use to the other fishers.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED – For the 2013-14 and 2014-15 season 44 fishermen used the selective net, including the 17 fishermen working in this project.</p> <p>The catch obtained with the selective net when there were no gillnets (summer 2013) were promising (37.8 kg / journey). Results during the shrimp season, when gillnets blocked the operation of the selective net, showed low performance of the selective net (6.7 kg / journey). In conclusion there is a gear conflict and the selective net doesn't operate well in presence of gillnets.</p>
<p>Result 1.3: During 2013 the 32 participating fishers (15 for finfish and 17 for shrimp) have mastered the technical, management and personal skills to use the new gears effectively and are models for the rest of the fishing community.</p>	<p>PARTIALLY ACHIEVED (NEEDS MORE PROGRESS) – Following the recommendations of the <i>training needs assessment</i>, during the project WWF and partners organized 10 training courses, with the assistance of 268 participants (around 100 fishermen participating in several courses, with an average of 27 fishermen per event).</p> <p>The number of trained fishermen exceeded the goal, but there still lot of work to do to create all capacities needed for an effective fisheries management.</p>
<p>Result 1.4: During 2013 and 2014 participating fishers will be selling their “vaquita free” products in preferential regional markets: 32 fishers in 2013 and 50 fishers in 2014.</p>	<p>PARTIALLY ACHIEVED - To date 29 fishermen had participated in markets for vaquita-friendly products. Pronatura has served 540 kg. of shrimp and finfish captured with the selective net and longlines in 19 events.</p> <p>For the season 2015-16, with not gillnets in the Upper Gulf, we expect to put in the market at least 15 tons of product and start positioning the label “vaquita-friendly” in Southern California, USA.</p>
<p>Result 1.5: From March to December 2014, at least 50 fishers will be using an alternative fishing gear for the</p>	<p>IN PROGRESS- WWF and Pronatura are working in a learning process with 46 fishermen organized in four clearly differentiated groups: 17 first adopters of the RS-INP-MX, 13</p>

<p>complete fishing cycle (March- June: finfish; September to March: shrimp)</p>	<p>new adopters, 12 users of longlines for finfish and 4 users of fish traps. For March 2015, no one was using alternative gear in a complete annual cycle; this situation is changing now.</p> <p>In April 2015, six of the users of the Selective net started working jointly with WWF and Inapesca in experiments of finfish traps; by the end of July the group will increase to 13. These 13 fishermen will be the first group using alternative gear in both seasons (complete annual cycle).</p>
<p>Objective 2: By April 2015, fishermen using alternative fishing gear RS-INP.MX will submit an updated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) demonstrating improved compliance of mitigation measures.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED – Users of the RS-INP-MX were included in the EIA presented by the Federations of fishing cooperatives.</p>
<p>Result 2.1: By September 2014, fishermen will submit an EIA that includes mitigation measures for the use of the selective gear RS-INP-MX during the 2014-2015 shrimp season.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED - The new EIA that considers 30 users of the RS-INP-MX and its mitigation measures was presented in December 15, 2014.</p>
<p>Result 2.2: By April 2015, all fishing days with the selective gear RS-INP-MX have been documented in order to evaluate the level of compliance with mitigation measures.</p>	<p>PARTIALLY ACHIEVED - From September to March 2015 an ad-hoc program designed for users of RS-INP-MX was implemented to improve the observations of the selective net as part of the EIA. At the end of the season the program had the following results: (1) 43% of the trips were recorded by on-board observers using logbooks and visual elements (photo and/or video); (2) 73% of the trips were recorded with either: onboard observer, data loggers or visual elements; and (3) 27% of the trips were not recorded at all.</p>
<p>Result 2.3: By April 2015, fishermen will submit an EIA that includes enhanced mitigation measures for the use of the selective gear RS-INP-MX based on the results of the 2014-2015 shrimp season.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED – The new EIA submitted in December 2015, contains mitigation measures for the use of the selective gear RS-INP-MX.</p>
<p>Objective 3: From January 2013 to December 2014 partner NGOs, governments (federal, local and municipal) and fishing sector leaders had worked together in an open and participatory process for helping fishers in a gear transition for saving vaquita from extinction</p>	<p>ACHIEVED - During the reporting period governments, academics, NGOs and fishing sector worked together (sometimes with different visions) looking for ways for saving vaquita. In these discussions WWF and partners played an important role for a gear transition that could save vaquita and maintain fishermen livelihoods.</p>

<p>Result 3.1: By December 2013, WWF and partners would have raised additional matching funds from Mexican Foundations, mostly from Fundación Carlos Slim.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED - WWF has worked with Pronatura on three proposals to the Fundación Carlos Slim (FCS). The first ran from May to September 2014 (31,000 USD); the second one started in October 2014 and will end in June 2015 (81,000 USD). A third proposal is now under review to start before September 2015 (around 50,000 USD to be defined). Together, the three proposals match more than 160,000 USD for the project, which is 30% more than the committed amount (121,968 USD).</p>
<p>Result 3.2: Before September 2013, local governments are aware about vaquita's plight.</p>	<p>N/A as this Result was deleted in accordance with SOS as part of an Amendment to the grant agreement</p>
<p>Result 3.3: For the fall 2014 WWF, NGO local partners and participating fishers will present to federal, state and municipal authorities a plan for a complete swap out of fishing gears of the artisanal fleet of San Felipe (304 skiffs) which represent 36 % of the fishing effort impacting vaquita and the fleet with more historical interactions between fisheries and vaquita.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED - WWF shared information and gave relevant arguments, that were used by Mexican Government for making the decisions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In February, 2013 the Mexican government created the vaquita advisory commission for the president. 2. In July 2013 the new standard for shrimp (NOM.002) included a phase out calendar for eliminating shrimp driftnets from water in three years. 3. In April, 2015 the government decreed a 2-year suspension of all gillnet fisheries in the Upper Gulf. <p>In particular the technical reports presented jointly between WWF and Inapesca regarding fishing gear, and the report of CIRVA V (partially sponsored by WWF) were relevant for these policy decisions.</p>
<p>Result 3.4: At the end of the project, federal and local governments understand the importance a of gear swap out for saving vaquita from extinction while promoting fishers welfare in the region</p>	<p>PARTIALLY ACHIEVED – Not all officers from local governments are fully convinced of a swap out. But the delivery of solid arguments and the socialization in workshops and meetings has being useful for making the point. At this moment, as shown in the previous result, the swap out of gillnets in favor of small trawl now is in a federal regulation and moving forward.</p> <p>As part of the plan of socialization of results, WWF organized and/or collaborate in four workshops during the grant period:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The event for launching the project, which was divided in two phases: planning (July 2013) and the green light to start fishing with the new net in San Felipe (August 2013) 2) Adaptive management of the strategic plan (February 2014)

	<p>3) Support to CIRVA V – This meeting was particularly important for the dissemination of the results of the decline in vaquita population (July 2014)</p> <p>4) Planning meeting to adjust action plans with the new regulations to ban gillnets and long lines in the Upper Gulf (February 2015)</p>
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2B. Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

Communication component was eliminated of the project as part of the second amendment and the impact of not realizing **it was positive** for the final outcome.

The last year there was some tension between conservation organizations and fishing sector. The new results of CIRVA V showed a drastic decline in vaquita population and the conservation sector urged actions to stop this decline. In the other hand, the fishing sector was reluctant to accept responsibility and worried for their future and livelihoods. During all these period WWF was invited to present information to Mexican Government decision makers --results of the experiments of new gear and technical opinions. Discretion and low profile were indispensable for keeping the trust of decisions makers. At the end, with the publication of the suspension decree in April, 2015. We could say that this low profile strategy was correct and ended in the desired outcome.

2C. Please list and submit (electronically if possible) any documents, tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

Please number and make sure titles correspond to titles of any attachments submitted electronically.

- 1) NOM-002 – This document is the norm for fishing shrimp which establish a phase-out calendar for gillnets in the Upper Gulf.
- 2) Gillnet Suspension – This is the legal agreement for the suspension of gillnets for 2 years

3. Species Conservation Impacts

Note: Please use this section to summarize the overall impact of your project. Present results in terms of:

- Overall impact of the project (see 3A to 3C below)
- Project activities’ impacts on species status (see 3.1 below),
- Population size and trajectories (see 3.2 below),
- Critical habitat condition and trajectory (see 3.3 below),
- Major threats (see 3.4 below), and
- Enabling conditions for effective conservation (see 3.5 below).

3A. Planned Outcome(s) / Impact(s) (as stated in the project logical framework):

1. By the end of 2014, 50 fishers will have changed the way they fish and would be demonstrating the commercial benefits of the new fishing system.
2. By the end of 2014, a complete program for exchanging all drift gillnets for alternative technologies is accepted by the federal government and progressing through the required administrative procedures for it to be declared and enforced within the next year.

3B. Actual Progress towards Impacts at Completion:

1. The final outcome doubled our expectations when writing the planned outcome. At the end of the project 100 fishermen had commercial permit of using the small trawl and around 50 had touch base with WWF to participate in our learning groups for improving the catch performance of the small trawl.
2. The final outcome was obtained before it was expected. By the end of 2013 a complete program with a phase-out calendar for gillnets was established as part of a federal official regulation the norm NOM-002.

In general at the end of this project everything is ready for the commercial use of the small trawl that will substitute shrimp driftnets. At this moment there is technological solution, clear regulatory framework, commercial permits, and the suspension of gillnets which represented a physical obstacle for the operation of the small trawl; with all of this together there is no reason for the small trawl to fail in the next shrimp season.

3C. Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Yes – The illegal fishery of totoaba re-appeared in the region causing tremendous damage to vaquita population and affecting the entire project.

In July 2014, the International Committee for the Recovery of Vaquita (CIRVA) reported that vaquita population decreased dramatically over the last three years. In response to this situation, the Mexican Government started discussions about closing fisheries across the entire vaquita habitat area. WWF was invited to some of the meetings and authorities showed interest in our opinion. Finally in December a plan to ban gillnets and longlines, while compensating fishermen, was released for public consultation. This new ban will come into effect in March 2015

As stated in the third report, this situation changed the context of the program. (1) fishermen wanted to keep their gillnet permit to receive compensation; (2) longlines (which do not affect vaquita) were also banned, eliminating one of the most promising alternatives; (3) fishermen finally agreed that CEDO (who works as consultant to them for the EIA) include the RS-INP-MX as part of the EIA; and (4) negotiation with Mexican government was identified as a preferable tactic to public pressure pushing

for the ban; thus we made a decision to suspend efforts on communications campaigns so that we didn't negatively affecting our negotiation role. With this in mind, WWF requested an amendment to the original project from IUCN.

Note: Following the summary provided above, please use questions 3.1 to 3.5 to provide a detailed, technical response for results achieved from inception of SOS support to date. Provide responses within the context of stated project objectives, where possible. Attach annexes if necessary. Depending on the project, not all questions may be applicable.

3.1. SPECIES POPULATION - Did you stabilize or improve the conservation status of a species or important species population

a. Global or target population:

The baseline estimation, before the project started, indicated a population of 267 vaquitas (2012). The last estimation, reported formally in July 2014, estimated less than 100 vaquitas. Since July, 2014 acoustic detections had continued decreasing. With this low numbers scientists prefer to validate numbers obtained by acoustic methods with visual surveys, before releasing new population estimations. From September to December a new cruise to estimate vaquita population with visual methods is programmed by Mexican Government.

b. Indicate type and level of improvement or decline within the context of the following parameters:

(i) numbers of individuals (use quantitative assessments, if available, otherwise state increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same over project period, with justification and methods);

The number of individuals continued decreasing from 267 in 2012 individuals to less than 100 in 2014.

(ii) population trajectory over a 5 year period from monitoring date as increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same (with natural ranges of variation taken into consideration; give quantitative estimates, if available).

From 2012 to 2014 the population was decreasing in a rate of 18.4% a year

3.2. IUCN RED LIST STATUS - After project implementation, can the species globally be considered for a change of Red List status, either positive or negative? If shifts of status within a category are applicable, describe relevant Red List metrics used to support assertion. Provide quantitative data, if available.

If the ban is perfectly enforced in 2015 and 2016 there will be no gillnets killing vaquita. In addition, if we succeed with the implementation of alternative gear in such way that no one return to use gillnets after the ban; then we could achieve our goal of eliminating vaquita mortality in gillnets. If doing so,

then we could expect that vaquita population could grow in a rate of 4% annually.

Considering this rate and no accidents in gillnets starting in March, 2015; then by the year 2045 we could have the same population as in 2012 (~250); by 2060 the same population than when the first actions to save vaquita were implemented in the 90's (~560); by 2080 we could have 1000 vaquitas, and could start analyzing the possibility of changing status; and by 2100 we could reach a stable population of around 2,500, which is half of the estimated carrying capacity of vaquitas in the Upper Gulf.

We should teach young scientists and new generations about vaquita, because our generation would never see this population recovered, even doing everything right.

3.3. CRITICAL HABITAT - Did your project improve the quality or condition of a threatened species' critical habitat within the project target area? Present in terms of the following parameters, where relevant:

(a) the total area (that is, the suitable habitat available to the target or global population);

YES – Before this project there was a no-take zone of 1 200 km² known as the vaquita refuge. During the term of this project, the government suspended fisheries in an area of 13 000 km².

(b) condition (note, this must be defined for suitability for each target species; for example, degree of fragmentation, edge effects, impact of invasive species, etc.); and

At this moment there are no measures of improvement of habitat quality, but it would be fair to expect that after two years of suspension of fisheries, the habitat will present improvements.

(c) estimated trajectory (that is, increasing, stable, decreasing) of critical habitat required by the population of the target species within the area addressed by the project.

Habitat reduction, fragmentation or condition is not a problem for vaquita. The only proven threat for vaquita is entanglement in driftnets. The project did not measure any changes in the estimated trajectory of vaquita's habitat.

3.4. DIRECT THREATS - Did your project stop or reduce important direct threats to a threatened species within the target area? Please state if the direct threats are for: (i) the target species; (ii) its critical habitat, or both. Present in terms of the threats':

(a) intensity (that is, high, moderate, low with criteria tailored to threat);

High – To date, the only proven cause of vaquita going to extinction is the use of drift gillnets. This project is focused on eliminating that threat.

(b) distribution (that is, widespread, common, localized); and

Widespread - There is presence of drift gillnets throughout the vaquita's habitat.

(c) area affected over time (that is, expanding, decreasing, stable using defined boundary) of 1-3 major, direct threats to the target species within the projects' target areas.

Expanding – The vaquita protection area increased from 1 200 to 13 000 km²

3.5. ENABLING CONDITIONS - Did your project contribute to improving, no impact on, or worsening enabling conditions that facilitate successful conservation for threatened species? Present in terms of the degree (that is, favorable, neutral, unfavorable) to which local socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions (that is, 'enabling conditions') contribute to the probability of success for conservation of the target species with the project area. Protected area tracking protocols are required, where applicable (consult with the SOS Secretariat on the appropriate PA tracking tool to use). Applicable metrics include:

(a) legislative tools associated with species' protection (poor, fair, good, very good);

Very good – WWF chose to pursue a modified fishing standard in order to protect the vaquita. This same tool could be replicated and tailored for other species threatened by bycatch issues. In addition, we are working with Conapesca to simplify the administrative procedures for testing alternative gears and promoting technology change in fisheries. If successful in these negotiations, we will be creating legislative conditions that will be useful for turtle and shark conservation as well.

(b) financing for conservation (poor, fair, good, very good – based on available resources for conservation, sustainable financing mechanisms are developed and in place, public-private partnerships, positive benefits for community livelihoods, etc.);

Very good – A key component of the project is developing markets for “vaquita free” seafood. This part of the project is also exploring ways to make the market strategy self-sustaining, or even profitable enough to finance other project activities, such as capacity building and training courses.

(c) wildland or protected area management effectiveness (poor, fair, good, very good – based on PA tracking tool indices applied to target area); and

Fair – The project doesn't deal directly with protected area management, but takes place in a Natural Protected Area, and uses some management tools of the Mexican Commission of Natural Protected Areas (Conanp), such as the special program for vaquita (PACE), which is an action plan for vaquita conservation.

(d) existence of robust conservation strategy or Action Plan for the species or critical habitat (poor,

fair, good, very good – based on important features such as priority areas identified and ranked, representation analysis complete, thresholds of habitat and species population size and condition identified, conceptual model and conservation action plan developed, actions prioritized and results chains elaborated, monitoring program).

Good – The project builds on Conanp’s special program for the vaquita (PACE). In addition, this project is part of a work plan developed by a group of non-governmental organizations (led by WWF), as part of a larger Action Plan for saving vaquita from extinction while improving fishermen’s livelihoods. The plan was jeopardized by the illegal fishing of totoaba; the reaction of Mexican Government was closing gillnet fisheries for two years. This measure was not part of the action plan, but was adequate to the dimension of this new threat.

4. Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community

a. Project Design Process:

Please describe what aspects of the project design contributed to its success or caused any shortcomings

This project was designed in a strong participative process, using project planning standards. During the project lot of unexpected things happened: changes in the leaderships in the fishing communities and the appearance of a new threat --illegal totoaba fishery. Some of the activities in the plan turned irrelevant, most of the assumptions changed and several conservation partners lost focus. However, having a strong and well planned conservation plan let us review the assumptions and act in an adaptive way, but maintaining the goal. Finally we could rapidly revise the conservation plan and start working under the new circumstances. Without a solid plan it wouldn’t be possible to adapt actions as fast as we did. The lesson learned is that even in those cases with important changes in context a solid conservation plan is essential for success.

b. Project Implementation:

Please describe what aspects of the project execution contributed to its success or caused any shortcomings.

Working with local conservation partners with strong presence in the field is a useful tool for working and creating capacities; however, depending in local conservation partners is always risky. When working with conservation partners, supervision is essential. In this project we had two very different experiences: (1) Pronatura - with low supervision they were able to comply with all the project activities and to present successful projects to the Alianza WWF-FCS as project match. (2) CEDO – they changed their mind several times, delivered late, and with some difficulties; for the second half of the project WWF put a full time supervisor to CEDO and with that solution the project start moving forward. The lesson learned is that we should continue working with local conservation partners but with strong supervision and looking for creating capacities on them.

c. Other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community:

Always measure the conservation object. The National Institute of Ecology measures acoustic detections of vaquita, every year. With this system they are able to measure the variation of the detections in time. While we were all working in eliminating shrimp driftnets and having important victories on that regards; scientist alerted that vaquita population was decreasing faster than ever. Without that information, we wouldn't start looking for a new threat and possibly wouldn't react on time. For that reason is very important to always have good baselines and measures of the conservation object.

5. Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the SOS investment in this project. Use the following categories:

(i) Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)

Yes – WWF-Mexico has an Alliance with Carlos Slim Foundation called “Alianza WWF-FCS”. The Alianza co-finance this project with two grants to Pronatura and is in process for accepting a third one.

WWF has worked with Pronatura on three proposals to the Alianza WWF-FCS, the first ran from May to September 2014 (31,000 USD); the second one started in October 2014 and will end in June 2015 (81,000 USD). A third proposal is now under review to start before September 2015 (around 50,000 USD to be defined). Together, the three proposals match more than 160,000 USD for the project, which is 30% more than the committed amount (121,968 USD).

In addition WWF used 80,000 USD funds from US-based foundations as match for this project for partially covering some of the staff time, travel costs, and project management during the 24 months of the project.

(ii) Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this SOS funded project.)

Yes – As a combined result of the urgency to save vaquita, the commitment of government, and the results of the SOS funded project, other donors had committed significant funds to support WWF's efforts for saving vaquita. The anticipated funds WWF is considering for the next two years are of 1.25 million dollars that will come from: California private foundations (830,000); WWF Network (170,000); Alianza WWF-FCS (150,000); International cooperation (100,000). Without the support of the SOS project, the results delivered by WWF would had being smaller and the capacity for leveraging new funds would be limited.

(iii) Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of SOS

investment or successes related to this project.)

Yes – The main investor and leader of the project for saving vaquita is Mexican Government. For 2015 they had committed 40 million dollars in compensation and enforcement to secure the two year suspension. WWF played a key role during the process for establishing the fishing suspension that leverages these important investments by Mexican Government.

6. Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results. Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Sustainability – As mentioned in previous sections, given the low numbers and the slow reproduction rate of vaquita, it will take 80 years without by-catch to start thinking in changing vaquita status in the red list. It is not desirable, or even possible, to maintain interventions for so long. For that reason this project is thought to create profitable alternatives for gillnets. The new alternatives should create a self-sustained long term solution that would not need further interventions. At the end of this project, important progress has been done for shrimp fishery and more effort is needed for developing a profitable finfish fishery.

Replicability - Gillnets are deathly for cetaceans and are a huge problem all around the globe. If succeeding in Mexico, some components of the model could be used for reducing the use of gillnets in other places of the planet, when there is interaction with small cetaceans.

7. Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project. This should be extracted from the responses provided in the Safeguards Aspects for SOS grants form submitted with past interim reports. Attach any additional document required.

This project is intended to support fishermen in finding ways for making a living without affecting vaquita. We worked in technological design of fishing gear that does not affect vaquita, created capacities among fishermen to use the new net, looked for better markets for fishing products captured with vaquita-friendly methods, and worked with governments to enable conditions for the use of these new technologies. However, during the project a new threat appeared: illegal fishing of totoaba –a giant fish whose swim bladder is highly appreciated in China. This new threat drove to the highest rate of decline in vaquita population ever and lower vaquita population to less than 100 individuals; government had to react. WWF assessments, reports and opinions were considered during the process at which government decided its actions to attend this emergency. The decision of the government was to suspend all gillnet fisheries in an area of 13,000 km², during two years. This decision affected fishermen and their families, while fishing is their main source of income. For that reason, government

created a compensation program of more than 40 million dollars and a huge enforcement campaign. This situation with millionaire compensations and high enforcement is not sustainable on time; for this reason WWF continued and will continue working on alternative ways for fishing that allow fishermen to make a living without affecting vaquita.

8. Additional Comments/Recommendations

Vaquita's habitat will be closed for gillnet fisheries during 2 years. We expect that this measure will have positive effects in all marine life in that area. It would be important to measure the effects of this closure in other species. In particular would be interesting to see the effects of the closure in totoaba population,

9. Information Sharing and SOS Policy

SOS is committed to transparent operations and to helping Civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our website, www.saveourspecies.org and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name:	Enrique Sanjurjo Rivera
Organization name and Mailing address:	World Wildlife Fund, Inc. Av. Álvaro Obregón 1665, int. 305 Col. Centro. CP 23000. La Paz, BCS, México
Tel:	+52 (612) 122 8433
Fax:	+52 (612) 122 8433
E-mail:	esanjurjo@wwfmex.org