

Spain's WOFCO plans shrimp processing plant in Paraguay

By [Matilde Mereghetti](#)

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From left to right: WOFCO's partners Alfredo Mendez and Borja Tenorio, Paraguay's vice-minister for industry, Ramiro Samaniego, Paraguay's minister of industry and commerce, Luis Castiglioni, Conarpesa's president, Fernando Alvarez president of CONARPEA and institutional relations manager, Lucio Tortosa.

Fast-growing Spanish seafood firm Worldwide Fishing Company (WOFCO) is planning to build a shrimp processing plant in Paraguay, Latin America.

The company told *Undercurrent News* that it had been given the green light to invest between \$10 million and \$12m in the new plant, which will have a processing capacity of approximately 10,000 metric tons per year.



Three of WOFCO's five founding members, at the Conxemar show, Vigo 2019 (Alfredo Mendez, Alberto Barreiro and Borja Tenorio). The other two partners are Giansandro Perotti (based in Ecuador) and Kunming Yang (based in China)

The new factory will be built in Puerto Fenix, Asuncion, and is expected to be operative by the first or second quarter of 2022, creating some 200 jobs. It will initially process Argentinian red shrimp, producing value-added products such as head-off, shell-on, easy-peel, and cooked.

In the future, more species, such as vannamei shrimp and illex squid could be processed there, the company said.

"Currently, we sell mainly Argentinian shrimp, but to complete the range we will explore the possibility of also giving added value to vannamei," WOFCO said, with the caveat that the Paraguay project was still in a "very early phase".

In addition to shrimp, the plant could also process "in all formats and presentations" other raw materials, such as Illex squid and even some species such as swordfish.

Value-added products, such as cooked shrimp, have gained popularity during 2020, both in the US and Europe; a trend that is expected to last.

The new facility "will allow us to expand our processing capacity, producing more value-added products", said the firm.



Lower production costs in the Latin American country would allow the Spanish company to supply both the North American and European markets with value-added Argentinian shrimp at competitive prices, WOFCO said.

But the company's executives declined to comment on production costs and highlighted the main reason for building a plant in Paraguay was "logistics", pointing to Paraguay's central location in the South American trade bloc (or Mercosur) region, and also the possibility of cutting delivery time to customers in Europe and the US.

"We want to be able to supply fully nished products from different origins to large distributors and retail chains," WOFCO said.

Paraguay is strategically located in between Argentina and Brazil, Latin America's largest nation, which is [about to open its doors to imported Argentinian red shrimp](#), as it did with Ecuadorian vannameia few years ago.

WOFCO explained that Paraguay is also a "strategic location" because of its proximity to the Argentinian fishing grounds and to certain consumer markets.

Argentinian shrimp can be carried to Asuncion, in Paraguay, in two days by truck. Once processed at the new plant, they can be put on a container and transported via river to Buenos Aires, Argentina, or Montevideo, Uruguay, and then shipped further to the US or Spain.

This would considerably speed up logistics, allowing WOFCO to respond faster to its customers' needs for value-added products.

Delivery time would be much quicker than a 130-day journey to China, where the Spanish firm currently re-processes Argentinian red shrimp, and on to Spain or the US.

WOFCO, set up by five partners, has been growing rapidly since its creation in 2016.

WOFCO's CEO, Borja Tenorio, and co-founder Alfredo Mendez have attended a meeting with Paraguayan authorities, to which Argentinian shrimp supplier Continental Armadores de Pesca (Conarpesa)'s president Fernando Alvarez and institutional relations manager Lucio Tortosa were also invited (see photo above).



□ Asuncion, Paraguay Credit: Shutterstock

Alvarez and Tortosa were invited as "advisors" due to their "great experience in the startup of new projects and factories", according to the Spanish firm.

"Our strategic suppliers support us to develop projects like this one in Paraguay. We have known the Alvarez family for a long time and whenever we have been able we have helped each other," WOFCO said.

Conarpesa is WOFCO's main supplier of Argentinian red shrimp.

After learning about the project in Paraguay, "other large Argentinian operators have approached us with great interest to join us in this project," WOFCO said.

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