



FISHERIES

OUR COMMON WEALTH



Fisheries – Our Common Wealth

is an international programme aimed at ensuring sustainability and improving the livelihoods of coastal communities in developing countries. Managed by a consortium of Commonwealth organisations, the two-year programme combines their expertise and networks to raise awareness and develop a knowledge base to help provide effective long-term solutions for fisheries management.

Why?

Global fish supplies are depleting at an alarming rate. Climate change, illegal fishing and bad practice are just a few factors behind this. Communities are increasingly turning to the seas for food and financial gain. At the same time food, fuel and coastal urbanisation agendas are putting fisher communities under increasing pressure. It is crucial that a concerted effort is made to reconcile these conflicting issues and appropriate mechanisms put in place to support fishing. This will help in our efforts towards sustainability and sustenance for generations to come.

The Commonwealth has special expertise and concern in this area. The majority of its 53 member states are islands, and many of its larger members have long coasts and important established fishing communities. Commonwealth assets include established networks of professional associations, NGOs and universities as well as regular sectoral meetings of Ministers. These offer opportunities to communicate with and learn from communities affected by unsustainable fishing.

Who?

The programme has attracted funding from DFID (the United Kingdom's Department for International Development) and AusAID, and harnesses the combined expertise and networks of:

- The Commonwealth Foundation
- The Commonwealth Human Ecology Council
- The Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit

These will work together with Commonwealth nations and fishing communities in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Pacific.

How?

Fisheries: Our Common Wealth takes a two-pronged approach, working both with fishing communities and governmental stakeholders in fisheries management. This helps build capacity while discovering the key issues that will aid in the identification of effective policy tools for fisheries management.

The programme will raise awareness among fishing communities to support them in making informed decisions about the way they manage fish stocks and in responding to changes in fisheries that impact on their livelihoods. This is to be achieved through:

- Recording and communicating regional case studies and best practice.
- Hosting study tours that focus on key issues around fisheries management.
- Administration of a small grants scheme for NGOs working to strengthen the resilience of fishing communities.

It will also work with governmental and business stakeholders in fisheries management, communicating their concerns and challenges to policy makers and political leaders at a regional and international level. This is achieved through:

- Engagement at regional ministerial forums in the Caribbean, Pacific and Southern Africa.
- Presentation of the programme's key findings internationally at the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago.

Commonwealth Foundation

The Commonwealth Foundation is an intergovernmental organisation, resourced by and reporting to Commonwealth governments, and guided by Commonwealth values and priorities. Its mandate is to strengthen civil society in the achievement of Commonwealth priorities - democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable, people-centred development, and to promote arts and culture.

www.commonwealthfoundation.com

Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit (CPSU)

The CPSU is the think-tank for the Commonwealth of 53 countries. They work to inform and influence policy decisions affecting commonwealth countries on issues such as democracy, human rights, economic development and civil society. The CPSU conduct research studies to inform and influence policy makers in over a quarter of the world's countries. They seek to put the policy choices before the Commonwealth into sharper focus, exploring options and suggesting new directions.

www.cpsu.org.uk

Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC)

CHEC works to promote education, research, practical projects and policy that support a human ecological approach to development. This approach addresses the complex relations between social systems and ecosystems at all levels as well as related mechanisms of governance. As a non-governmental organisation, CHEC works closely with its regional Chapters and Commonwealth Universities on local projects. Through these, it strengthens its knowledge base and understanding of areas such as forestry; human settlements; health and nutrition; capacity analysis and development for small island states; water and energy, and education for sustainable development. This information is also shared at an international level through advice and advocacy in the United Nations and Commonwealth arenas.

www.checinternational.org

The programme's findings, research and case studies will be published and also compiled in a single volume, which will be made available on-line and through Commonwealth networks.

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www.commonwealthfisheries.org

