

1. STUDY OBJECTIVES

This report provides an assessment of institutional capacity requirements needed to support the development of Sri Lanka's fishery sector. The report's focus is to clarify policy direction and the need for measures to strengthen legislation and to recommend changes to the institutional structure that can support policy implementation.

The project objective is to support improved capacity of individuals, institutions and civil society to sustainably govern fisheries resource use in Sri Lanka reflecting the "building better than before tsunami" principle. The defined tasks are summarised below:

- to conduct a strategic and operational review of MFAR and other support corporations;
- to support the programming for the implementation of policy initiatives;
- to recommend changes to proposed legislation which will support the sector's development;
- to create and build awareness on the internationally accepted principles;
- to identify required changes to MFAR, the departments, agencies and corporations which will assist the organisations in implementing policy; and
- to review interactions with other stakeholders, particularly the community based organisations.

The capacity assessment and institutional analysis is not a review or evaluation of the performance of MFAR in the past and against previous policies. In summary, the assessment carried out the following:

- Analysed the strengths and weakness of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Sector 2007-2016: in the context of the new MFAR Ten Year Development Policy Framework and the corresponding Log Frame;
- Reviewed the existing laws and regulations that apply to the fisheries sector and identified the changes needed for implementation of the new Ten Year Development Policy Framework; and
- Identified the capacity building needs and HRD constraints / issues that need to be overcome for the institutions to implement the Ten Year Development Policy Framework.

The review team explained to the MAFR Secretary that an institutional review needed to identify what results and actions the fisheries sector institutions were supposed to be support. The implementation of policy therefore required the development of an agreed Log Frame that clearly established the needed results, activities and the institutional inter-linkages.

The Terms & Reference (TOR) for this study and the Approach and Methodology used to achieve these outputs is summarised in Appendix A and B respectively. The work was undertaken between the period April to August 2007. The following consultants participated in the work:

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2. Asoka Gunawardena, Institutional Specialist, ICEIDA
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2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview on the current status of fisheries and the marine environment

Overview: Sri Lanka's fishery sector accounts for 1.8 percent of GDP (2006), generating US\$45.5m in first sale fish revenues along with a growing export market accounting for US\$14m. Marine and inland fisheries production in 2006 amounted to 215 000 tonnes and 35 300 tonnes respectively. Pre Tsunami, marine production levels had been as high as 264 000 tonnes. The principal marine fisheries are tunas (yellowfin and skipjack), small and medium pelagic fish, coral reef fish and other coastal species such as lobster. The principal aquaculture species are tilapia, carps and tiger shrimp, along with growing sales of ornamental fish.

Resource base: Sri Lanka's fisheries and aquatic resource base includes a territorial sea of 21 500 sq. km. and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 517 000 sq. km. The country has a narrow continental shelf with an average width of 22 km. Its extent is 30 000 sq. km which is 5.8 percent of the country's ocean area. Estimates of Maximum Sustainable Yield of coastal fisheries vary from 162 000¹ to 250 000². Present coastal catches are in the region of 121 000 tonnes, with a transfer of effort to offshore fishing using multi day boats. The offshore fisheries target mainly skipjack and yellow fin tuna. These fall under management ambit of the IOTC. IOTC perceives that coastal fisheries, which includes the Sri Lankan Multi day Boat fleet, along with other groups (purse seine fishing with FADs) is putting increased pressure on the stocks. However, current exploitation rates for yellow fin are judged to be close to or slightly above MSY³. In this context, it is noted that that long line fishing is not cited as a problem fishery.

Sri Lanka also has extensive freshwater and brackish water resources to sustain viable fishing activities. These comprise around 260 000 ha of large irrigation reservoirs (70 850 ha), medium irrigation reservoirs (17 000 ha), minor irrigation reservoirs (39 300 ha), seasonal village tanks (100 000 ha) flood lakes (41 000 ha), upland reservoirs/estate tanks (8 100 ha) and Mahaweli river basins (22 700 ha). On the basis of their size and fishery management norms the reservoirs in the country can be grouped under three broad categories:

1. large (over 800 ha) and medium (200-800 ha) which are used for capture fisheries;
2. small (1-200 ha) irrigation reservoirs for culture-based fisheries; and
3. seasonal tanks which hold water for 6 - 8 months a year for culture fisheries

Opportunities also exist for brackish water aquaculture in a total extent of around 12 000 ha.

¹ Wijyaratne, B (2001)

² The last comprehensive survey of the coastal waters done in 1979-80 (by RV Dr Fridtjof Nansen) indicated a possible annual harvestable yield of 250,000 tonnes. Dayaratne (1996) estimated that capture levels had reached Optimal sustainable yield

³ IOTC, Report of the ninth session of the Scientific Committee, November 2006