

ENHANCING FISH MARKET INFORMATION (EFMI): USE OF MODERN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE LAKE VICTORIA FISHING COOPERATIVES INCOME



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Project site: Lake Victoria, Western Kenya



PHOTO:KMFRI

Traders preparing fish for sale in Kisumu Market

Background

Lake Victoria is Kenya's most important fishery resource, producing fish valued at about US\$ 70 million and earning US\$ 50 million from fish exports. The lake supports over 50,000 fish farmers, 300,000 local fish processors and traders, 7 fish processing firms and many primary cooperative type organizations, including; 30 small fishermen cooperative societies, 300 beach management units and 350 women fish trader associations. Although the region is well covered by mobile phone networks, the fishing community has not taken advantage of this technology to market fish. As a result fish pricing is not transparent, marketing costs are high and there are heavy post-harvest fish losses.

Project Summary

Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) focuses on research and development issues. This project involves setting up a system for collecting real time key market information using mobile phones from about 150 fish landing sites, markets and fish processing

firms. The information will be relayed to a data centre located in Kisumu, to be synthesized, packaged and made accessible to beneficiaries through mobile phones, the Internet, newspapers and local radio. The available market information will include:

- Prices and quantities of fish;
- The number of fish buyers and cold storage fish trucks;
- Basic weather information that can influence market decisions.

The project will support the setting up of the data centre, training data collectors and analysts, running workshops, consultative meetings with key partners, media publicity and awareness generating events. It will procure office supplies and support fieldwork. Cooperative organizations will be involved in designing and running the project, and will directly benefit as they will each be provided with a mobile phone for project work, the costs of which for generating and relaying market information will be accounted for.

This project contributes to the creation of employment and increased income for fish farmers and fish traders, who are mostly under 35 years old. The fishing

community will be empowered through income and work generation, therefore made less vulnerable to the effects of HIV/AIDS.

The project supports the following Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) objectives:

- Youth empowerment, youth employment and elimination of child labour, particularly in its worst form.

Partners

KMFRI is a parastatal in the Ministry of Fisheries Development in Kenya, therefore will represent government interests in the project. The main partners are primary level cooperative organizations:

- Fishermen Cooperative Societies (FCS) led by Gembe Fishermen Cooperative Society;
- Beach Management Units (BMU) led by Mbita Beach Management Unit;
- Women Fish Traders Associations (WFTA);
- Association of Fish Processors and Exporters of Kenya (AFIPEK).

The Cooperatives and Beach Management Units will play a key role, as they will be supplying market information from their different locations. They will be invited to participate in workshops and consultative forums.

Beneficiaries

In total 45,000 fishermen, 80,000 fish traders and processors, 7 fish processing firms and 30 fishermen cooperative societies will benefit from this project. KMFRI, the Ministry of Fisheries Development and AFIPEK will benefit from capacity enhancement through development of a market information database.

Expected achievements

The main achievements of the project will be the establishment of a market data and information collection service and the creation of a dissemination system serving 150 fish landing sites on Lake Victoria via mobile phones, the internet, newspaper and radio broadcasts. A subsidiary achievement will be a database containing key market information. The expected impacts of the project are:

- Increase of fish farmers and fish traders' income;
- Preventing middlemen fixing false prices by making available information on comparative fish prices;
- Reduction of post-harvest losses by avoiding landing sites where fish are likely to be unsold or spoilt;
- Reduction of fish marketing costs by making informed decisions on the most cost-effective markets and avoidance of unnecessary transport costs;
- Increased awareness of market trends.

Project duration and budget

Project duration: 12 months, June 2009 - May 2010
Total budget: USD 105,838
Contribution from COOP^{AFRICA}: USD 83,951



PHOTO:KMFRI

Fish waiting for auction at a landing beach

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