Promoting Livelihood Benefits from Fish Aggregation Devices

It is estimated that almost 50% of the Tanzanian population are poor, represented primarily by those living in rural areas and includes those involved in small-scale fisheries. Coastal and near-shore resources are commonly known to be stressed and threatened by destructive fishing methods and over-exploitation. FMSP research has indicated that implementation of Fish Aggregating Devices or FADs represent a potential tool for diversifying fishing opportunities for artisanal fishers in East Africa, enabling them to exploit different resources offshore (R4777, R8249). The research has raised awareness amongst a wide variety of stakeholders to the potential of deep-sea FAD fisheries, including poor people (fishers), institutions supplying services to the poor (national and district government; national research institutions and NGOs), employers of the poor (fishing and processing companies) and policy makers (national governments).

The most recent research tested the transferability of these techniques from the Pacific to East Africa. The aim was to develop offshore fisheries resources, by providing technical support for fishers to expand their sphere of operation away from over-fished inshore grounds. Direct technical support and offshore fisheries training was provided to over 40 poor fishers through fishing trials focusing on pelagic fisheries resources (e.g. tuna) known to be attracted to the devices, using local vessels to establish and test six FADs at two locations over a 12 month period.

A new FAD design was developed for the conditions off the coast, delivering the first ever SE Monsoon-tested FAD design deployed in Tanzania.

- A practical guide to planning and developing a FAD programme was produced with SPC and a policy brief highlighting key issues for developing FAD programmes as fishery livelihood diversification tools resulted through research between 1991 and 2003 (R4777, R8249).
- In 2005/06, wider national and international promotion has been achieved through:
  - contribution to SADC-EU MCS Programme's Fisheries Observer Handbook and to a FADs Theme Sheet to IUCN's Managing Marine Protected Areas – A Toolkit for the Western Indian Ocean (R8331)
  - demonstration of technical requirements for fishing around FADS which has encouraged two NGOS and a commercial company to further investigate the potential of investing in FADs beyond the project's life.
- The research has been funded by DFID through their Fisheries Management Science Programme (see www.fmsp.org.uk, projects R4777, R8249 and R8331).