Developing Countries Generate Economic Benefits from Control of Foreign Fishing

Distant water fishing fleets are under increasing pressure to exploit new resources. Such is the global demand for fish that large numbers of vessels undertake Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing on the high seas and within those exclusive economic zones (EEZ) that lack effective monitoring control and surveillance (MCS). At least $4 billion of catch value is lost annually in developing countries reducing food security.

While developing countries can generate income from allowing foreign fishing vessels in their waters, the deals are often poorly negotiated e.g. African countries may receive as little as 1% of catch value from EU vessels. Optimising licensing of foreign fleets and MCS ensures financial benefits derived from the sector are maximized. Revenue can be employed locally to ensure food security and initiate development to improve poor people's livelihoods. Fisheries Management Science Programme research on the Control of Foreign Fishing has developed a novel and innovative method for evaluating the benefits from licensing foreign fishing, guiding the decision making process. Its application has led to substantial increases to coastal state revenues from fisheries. In the Seychelles, licensing policy was revised, local MCS capacity increased leading to successful arrests and convictions of illegal foreign vessels. National revenues were increased through more licenses issued and heavier fines. Employment increased and local processing capacity was developed due to increased use of port services and increased landings. In the British Indian Ocean Territories, revised legislation and a new management system resulted in substantial increases in annual revenues to £1-£2.5 million.

- The Control of Foreign Fisheries model was developed by MRAG, its application tested with partners in Seychelles, South Pacific, British Indian Ocean Territory, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands delivering significant benefits via a series of projects from 1991.
- In 2005/06 Project R8463 tested the transferability of the model to Tanzania and Kenya.
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