PAPUA NEW GUINEA: TWO NEW FISHERIES PROJECTS UNDERWAY

ADB approves USD 5.7 million for coastal fisheries project

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a loan of USD 5.7 million to Papua New Guinea (PNG) for a Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Project, which aims to improve the management of the country's valuable coastal fisheries resources, especially in overfished areas. The project will also create income-earning opportunities for fishermen by providing links to established commercial fishing centres, and will strengthen provincial fisheries offices by training fisheries officers to better manage fisheries resources at the provincial level.

About 30,000 coastal households, whose livelihoods depend on fisheries, will benefit directly from this project.

Phase 1 of the project began in 2000, in which extensive research and consultations were made throughout the country with stakeholders such as fishery participants, representatives of the public and the private sector, resource users and owners, and non-governmental organisations. During this process, the provinces of Milne Bay, Morobe, New Ireland and Western were identified as the target provinces for the project.

These provinces possess either one or all of the following: a supporting infrastructure, a relative abundance of fish resources, potential for increased value from small-scale fisheries, and proximity to commercial fishery centres.

The project also include the construction of: a tuna longlining wharf in Lae, a small boat jetty in Daru, a small boat jetty and a transit house in Alotau, and a mariculture facility on Nago Island, Kavieng.

Rural coastal fisheries project kicks off in PNG

The implementation phase of the new Rural Coastal Fisheries Development Project has began with the arrival of the Project Team Leader, Mr Sean Marriott, in Port Moresby in October 2002.

This follows on from the signing of the financing agreement last year between the then Prime Minister, Sir Mekere Morauta and the EU Delegate, Mr Anthony Crasner.

The project is intended to run for five years and has a budget of six million euros. It has identified seven project sites throughout the country: Alotau, Buka, Daru, Kavieng, Lae, Madang and Port Moresby.

Mr Marriot said the project would support small-scale fishing enterprises. Its objective is to improve the welfare of the rural coastal population through a greater participation in harvesting and marketing of their marine resources.

"Apart from infrastructure developments, the big idea of this project is to promote development through private sector initiatives. A line of credit, backed up by an initial loan scheme, will be established through banks and private companies to enable small fishing enterprises and fishing groups to purchase boats, fishing gear, ice plants and other equipment. The private enterprise ethos will be reinforced through training and help in preparing investment proposals so that, from the start, this project will act as a credit guarantor to communities who do not have access to capital — and not simply as a source of handouts."

"Running alongside the credit schemes will be help for communities with depleted resources to acquire the resource management skills that will help them develop and recover those resources so that they can realise the full benefit of sustainably managed assets. Fishing groups will also be given the skills to enable them to manage their business and resources effectively and profitably."

"This departure from the traditional fisheries project delivery vehicle offers an exciting and challenging approach to development in a sector which has often frustrated effective progress and the Rural Coastal Fisheries Development Project aims to change all that,” Mr Marriot said.

(Source: Fishing Line, bi-monthly newsletter of the National Fisheries Authority, Issue No. 11, September–October 2002)