Australian Community Rehabilitation Programme (ACRP Phase 3)

Socio-economic Development Project for the Maruthankerny Fishing Community

The Australian Community Rehabilitation Programme (ACRP) under Australia’s flagship development initiative works to support communities in rehabilitation and social inclusion in Sri Lanka.

IOM’s ‘Transition Initiative for Sustainable Return & Reintegration of IDPs in Sri Lanka’ is a five year (2010-2015) project under the Ausaid ACRP3 programme which focuses on sustainable return and socio-economic recovery of conflict and disaster affected communities in the Northern and Central provinces through stabilization and development of main sectors such as Agriculture, Fisheries, Dairy and Disaster Risk Reduction.

Socio-economic Development Project for the Maruthankerny Fishing Community in Vadamarachchi East Divisional Secretariat Division.

Maruthankerny is the main fishing point used by 15 FCSs representing 3,606 fishing families, where IOM identified the need of a facility that will produce ice. This project is one of many interventions IOM had undertaken in relation to provision of essential infrastructure facilities to vulnerable communities.

Since 2009, these fisherman families have resettled & restarted their livelihood activities but were affected in outcomes due to the lack of ice that is used to maintain the quality of catch. Before IOM’s interventions, the fishermen were selling their daily catch at low prices to local and regional buyers as they were unable to keep the catch fresh without adequate quantities of ice. Further to this, buyers supply ice to the fishermen at high rates which shifted the balance of price negotiations unfairly in favour of buyers who transport the fish to outside markets with greater demands.

IOM provided an ice production facility to the Vadamarachchi East Fishermen Cooperative Society Union (VEFCSU) that would produce 5 tons of ice per day, ameliorating the market conditions under which the fishermen operate. The production facility is expected to meet 50% of the present daily ice requirement of the 3,600 fishermen of 15 GN Divisions and will have an immediate benefit in their income. The production facility includes a building at the VEFCSU’s site, ice plant, cold room and safety equipment with a backup power supply generator. IOM also provided support services and trainings on operation and maintenance of the plant for 2 community members.

Benefits expected through these assets are that the fishermen will gain increased access to other markets directly with prolonged catch freshness which will have impact in their ability to increase revenues.

The project was implemented under the guidance of Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and in collaboration with other respective Government Authorities, Community Based Organizations and community representatives who were employed and will continue to work at the plant.

The College of Fisheries & Nautical Engineering (CoFNE) has trained a total of 65 fishermen in marine chart reading and in Out board Motor (OBM) repair which has provided confidence for the fishermen to use high capacity multi-day boats. Fishermen now venture into the deep sea, expanding catchment areas. Adoption of modern technologies has increased yield and fishermen appreciate the need for training which is conducted through the CoFNE. Navigation equipment also reduces unintended movement into Indian waters, which is a major conflict issue at local, national and regional levels.