

Investigating Information Gaps that Impact on the Economic Efficiency of Offshore Fisheries Sector in Sri Lanka

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Offshore fishery in Sri Lanka is one of the most potential resources that can be developed to meet the future demands for the economic efficiency. To accomplish this, technology and information have a major role to play with rapid technology advancements and the competition in the fishery. The study identifies technology and information gaps of fisheries industry to enhance the economic efficiency.

Necessary data and information was collected from 30 vessels using an interview based questionnaire (25% of the monthly mean landings of vessels at the Negombo fishery). Major issue was the lack of knowledge and skills in operating the available equipment. Most fishers (97%) do not have adequate knowledge on modern

technologies available in the industry or the skills to apply them to get their maximum use. Therefore, a fleet development program is recommended to be initiated to use new technologies for safe navigation, fish finding, fishing operations and on board fish processing and storage. Awareness creation on information and technology is recommended onsite as well as via electronic and print media. In parallel to that, all relevant information could be made available online and make them aware on how to access information. "Nenasala" telecentre network could be useful for this. Updated global marketing information such as fish prices is useful for fishers to have a higher income, and for protection from intermediaries. Information shared across the value chain will be an advantage for reducing the risk of volatile fish prices that depend on the export demand. Network coverage for mobile phones is available within 25-30 miles from the coast. This can be utilised for providing information. A Certificate course for offshore fishers is recommended to develop their professional skills that will make them eligible for obtaining proposed fishing license.

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