Chapter

“Aquatic Resources”

Introduction

Seas. Coasts. Ecosystems. The looting of the world’s aquatic resources.

© GIZ/Lea Klarmann

Fish is sought-after. Fish is scarce. The seas are fished to depletion in many parts of the world. Commercial fishing fleets pitted against artisanal small-scale fishermen. An unequal contest. Coastal communities lack food. Fisherfolk lack income. Aquaculture promises an alternative. Fish farming instead of capture fisheries. High demand as an export commodity. Not always a blessing for coastal ecosystems. They are under threat. From human activity. And from climate change.

More than half the world’s population now lives in coastal regions. Marine and coastal biodiversity is the basis of many of these coastal communities’ livelihoods.

But it is increasingly endangered. Unsustainable fishing techniques and illegal fishing are depleting fish stocks, and some species are at risk of extinction. Other countries distant-water fishing fleets greatly exacerbate the problem. Sustainable management and sustainable use of marine resources are the only options if we are to conserve the oceans’ abundant fish stocks for the future.

The development of human settlements, intensive agriculture, the expansion of tourism infrastructure and, not least, near-shore oil drilling, pose a growing threat to coastal regions. Climate change and its impacts, such as sea-level rise, are also adversely affecting these areas and intensifying the pressure on ecosystems. In many regions, the natural life support systems on which human communities depend are in many regions over-utilised and on the verge of collapse.

Over recent decades, aquaculture has become a key economic sector in many developing countries. It now supplies almost 50% of the fish and fishery products consumed worldwide. But despite its dynamic development over the last 30 years, aquaculture production cannot keep pace with demand. For countries such as Thailand and Viet Nam, fish and fishery products from aquaculture are now major export commodities. But intensive fish farming also pollutes the environment: for example, contaminated wastewater is often discharged untreated, putting coastal ecosystems at risk.

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

GIZ supports partner countries and helps them to manage their coastal zones and aquatic resources in a sustainable manner. The implementation of international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) provides an important framework for action here. If regulatory measures are to have any effect, however, well-functioning monitoring and surveillance systems are needed. GIZ advises its partners on how to set up these systems and introduce sustainability standards for responsible fisheries. International codes of conduct and standards have a key role to play in aquaculture as well and are an important factor in generating value along the entire production chain.

Sustainable coastal zone management supports the conservation of endangered ecosystems and of habitats. With so many divergent interests at play here, conflicts are common. For that reason, mediation, land-use planning and human resource development are also part of GIZ's portfolio of services.

For more detailed information about specific issues to aquatic resources, you can read through the 'briefing notes'. Please contact the person named at the bottom of the briefing note if you have further questions.

Contact

Dr. Mark Prein
E Mark.Prein@giz.de
T +49 6196 79-1471
I www.giz.de

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered Offices
Bonn und Eschborn

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn
T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

Division Rural Development and Agriculture / March 2015