

## Sharing data and ideas for better fisheries management



Local people at Huay Luang reservoir in NE Thailand indicated that they lacked information to participate in co-management and planning arrangements under a Mekong River commission fisheries project. Co-management of the reservoir would enable them to ensure that their own objectives for use of the fisheries resources were met to provide food and income for their families, but sustainably with relevant assessment information from government scientists.

To improve fisheries management an increasing trend has been adoption of co-management arrangements. Access to information is essential to empower fisher community members to make informed decisions for sustainable livelihood benefits. But co-managed fisheries present a particular challenge to data collection and information sharing amongst the large range of stakeholders and their different levels of capacity. Mechanisms to achieve this are conspicuously lacking in most developing countries. Guidelines developed through the Fisheries Management Science Programme help bridge this gap.

In Thailand FMSP guidelines were applied resulting in the development of a Resource Management Committee and Information Centre. Plans for data collection and sharing were developed with participants representing Department of Fisheries, research organisations and 10 villages around Huay Luang reservoir. In Bangladesh they have been adopted in co-management arrangements in 8 locations in 7 districts. Publication of the guidelines by FAO and field guides to their use has made them available globally and over 4,500 people are aware of them. More informed co-management arrangements will lead to better management to meet people's expectations.

- DFIDs Fisheries Management Science Programme funded two projects related to data collection for co-management between 1998 and 2005 (R7042, R8285) drawing on details from a number of other projects.
- In 2005/06 Project R8462 adapted, field tested and promoted guidelines for designing data collection and sharing mechanisms for co-managed fisheries.
- The Guidelines are published as FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 494/1&2.
- A coordinated approach to uptake promotion was taken with other projects sharing a co-management theme (R8464; R8470, See [www.fmsp.org.uk](http://www.fmsp.org.uk))