



Capability Statement

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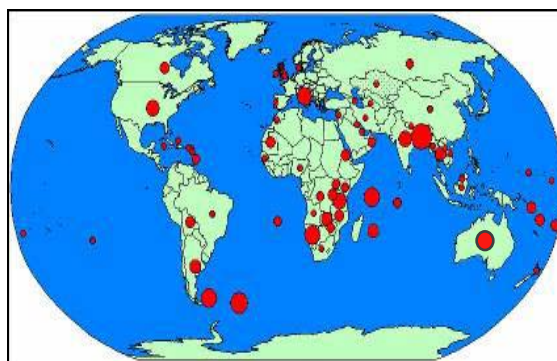
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About MRAG Asia Pacific

MRAG Asia Pacific is an independent fisheries and aquatic resource consulting company dedicated to the sustainable use of natural resources through sound, integrated management practices and policies. We are part of the global MRAG group – an international leader in the field of fisheries and aquatic resource consulting with offices in Europe, North America and the Asia Pacific.

Established in 1986, MRAG (or the Marine Resources Assessment Group) has successfully completed over 400 projects in more than 60 countries. Our in-house experts have a wide variety of technical expertise and practical experience across all aspects of aquatic resource management, policy and planning, allowing us to take a multidisciplinary approach to every project. Our capability to service an extensive array of resource management needs is further extended through our network of associations with internationally acclaimed experts in academic institutions and private organisations worldwide.



MRAG projects worldwide

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1. Our Company

MRAG Asia Pacific provides technical advice and practical services to assist governments, inter-government agencies and other stakeholders with the sound management and sustainable development of fisheries and other aquatic resources and ecosystems.

With over two decades of experience, the MRAG group has the capability to service an extensive range of resource management needs across the Asia-Pacific region, ranging from small scale, short term inputs to major, multi-year, international resource management initiatives.

MRAG's project teams are formed from both in-house specialists and our worldwide network of collaborators and contractors to bring specific regional expertise and knowledge to the development and implementation of each project. Our team includes specialists with both practical and technical expertise in fields as diverse as fisheries and marine planning, social and economic assessment, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), maritime policy and law, coastal zone management (CZM) and information technology, and includes several world renowned leaders in their fields.

2. Our Services

MRAG Asia Pacific's multidisciplinary team of specialists can service a diverse array of technical and practical needs to the highest level of excellence.

Our services include:

2.1 Policy Advice and Strategic Planning

The creation of sound environmental and fisheries policy requires successful balancing of a wide variety of environmental, economic and social objectives. MRAG understands the importance of the relationship between multi-disciplinary research and policy development and provides clients with advice and guidance on the preparation of coherent policy frameworks.

MRAG provides counsel and practical assistance in environmental policy and planning including advice on the establishment of fisheries regimes, maritime law and governance arrangements, international fishing rights and licensing, coastal and estuarine policy and the economic and biological sustainability of specific fisheries.

MRAG's service also includes coordinating the involvement of multiple stakeholders to facilitate consensus-building processes.

2.2 Institutional Development

Strong and resilient institutions with adequate skills, capabilities and resources are critical in effectively implementing sound, integrated aquatic resource management regimes.

With over two decades of experience in designing practical solutions to resource management problems, MRAG is well positioned to offer advice, services and personnel to assist in strengthening institutional capacity. A complete service is offered, ranging from initial capability and needs assessment and systems analysis, to provision of key management personnel for

short or long term advisory positions in resource management agencies.

2.3 Programme Management, Performance Evaluation and Project Review

MRAG offers a complete programme management and development service. We use sophisticated and adaptive project planning and management tools to create programme frameworks suited to the needs of the client and user demand. These tools are used to define programme goals, purpose and outputs; to define realistic project milestones and the activities needed to achieve them; to plan human resource use in the implementation of the Programme; and to monitor progress and impact. We have experience in managing worldwide programmes with large budgets and are able to assemble and manage large multidisciplinary teams. We are able to provide experts in all aspects of management and development from strategic programme analysis, planning and design, to its implementation and financial administration.

MRAG also pays considerable attention to tracking the performance of projects in relation to the goals and milestones specified in the project design. Sophisticated project planning and monitoring tools are used, such as the Logical Framework, which include the pre-specification of verifiable indicators of project and programme performance.

MRAG also has a wealth of experience in the application of project planning management tools in the fisheries development sector. Besides monitoring our own project and programme performance, MRAG's expertise has been used extensively by governments and international funding agencies such as the World Bank to evaluate the performance of external projects and resource assessment programmes.

2.4 Resource Surveys and Assessment

The first step in implementing resource management programmes often entails a comprehensive characterisation of the resource base. Our focus on integrated resource management encourages consideration of the physical, biological, technical, social, economic, and institutional elements of resource utilisation. We have built up considerable in-house expertise in biological and economic resource assessment and have several world-renowned assessment scientists on staff.

MRAG has undertaken assessments on a diverse range of living resources from fish, crustacean, and mollusc species to terrestrial livestock. Assessments have been conducted on resources of all sizes, from small tropical island fisheries in the Pacific and Caribbean, where catches are measured in a few hundred tons and vessels number less than a hundred, to industrial operations, where catches exceed 2,000,000 tons, and extensive inshore and floodplain fisheries with in excess of 1,000,000 fishers and 10,000 mechanised artisanal vessels.

MRAG has also participated in the design and implementation of industrial and artisanal fisheries data collection programmes in over 30 countries. Comprehensive services are also provided for fishery resource surveys including arrangements for vessel charter, survey design, recruitment of scientific personnel, equipment procurement, data analysis, preparation of scientific reports and full logistical support.

2.5 Social and Economic Assessment

A key consideration in the implementation of new resource management arrangements, such as fishery management plans or aquatic protected areas, is the economic and social impact on affected stakeholders.

MRAG has considerable expertise in undertaking social and economic impact assessments of changes in resource use, including cost-benefit analyses, economic impact assessments, social impact assessments and bio-economic modelling.

In addition, MRAG's access to specialists across environmental, economic and social disciplines has us uniquely placed to provide comprehensive assessments of the triple bottom line performance of management proposals and alternative resource use options.

2.6 Environmental Assessment

Coastal and marine ecosystems are some of our most valuable natural habitats. They provide food and livelihoods for communities throughout the Asia Pacific region, while also providing the ecosystem services upon which life depends. However, many coastal and marine ecosystems are under pressure from coastal development, habitat loss, pollution and overfishing. Increasing recognition of the need to preserve and maintain the natural function of aquatic ecosystems has led many governments, industries and other stakeholders to evaluate their impacts on natural processes.

MRAG has developed considerable experience in the undertaking of environmental assessments. We utilise the latest techniques in sampling and survey design to provide credible, independent assessments of environmental impacts and have completed projects including environmental assessments of pollution controls, studies on the effects of flood control systems, identification of conflicts between fishing gear types, threats to non-target species from fishing gear, and design of guidelines to minimize the loss of biodiversity.

2.7 IUU Fishing and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a global problem costing an estimated US\$10 to US\$23 billion each year. IUU fishing can have a damaging effect on socially and economically important fish stocks and on the wider environment. Developing countries often suffer the greatest cost from IUU fishing and there is a strong relationship between the effectiveness of governance arrangements and the level of illegal fishing.

MRAG has a wealth of knowledge on IUU fishing issues and is an acknowledged world leader in techniques to estimate the scale and impacts of IUU fishing. MRAG has also built up substantial expertise and capacity on state of the art techniques for fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS).

MRAG's services include providing advice on improving governance arrangements to combat IUU fishing, best practice MCS techniques, institutional capacity building on IUU and MSC issues, advice on information technology and systems needs to support MCS measures and analytical techniques to estimate the scale and impact of IUU fishing.

2.8 Observer Programmes

Fishery observer programmes are increasingly being used by resource management agencies, RFMOs and other stakeholders to provide independent data on parameters important in managing fisheries, including quantity, composition and location of catches, gear used, and interactions with protected species.

The MRAG group has built up substantial experience in the design, implementation and management of fishery observer programmes. We have designed and implemented fishery observer programmes in the south Atlantic (South Georgia), south west Indian Ocean (Prince Edward Islands), central western Indian Ocean (British Indian Ocean Territory), the northwest Atlantic (NAFO Regulatory Area), Pacific Ocean (Hawaiian and Samoan longline fisheries) and

Alaska , amongst others. The scope of these operations has ranged from the supply of an individual observer to servicing a fleet of 30 or more offshore vessels, requiring substantial logistic support and management.

MRAG has also considerable experience in reviewing observer programmes including completing an independent review of the largest observer programme in the world, the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Programme off the coast of Alaska.

MRAG provides a complete end-to-end service involving:

- Observer recruitment
- Training
- Programme oversight
- Scientific and safety equipment supply
- Development of observer manuals specific to the fishery
- Data collection and handling including database design and management
- Travel logistics
- Safety and work clothing
- Insurance
- Technical support
- Data analysis and report production

MRAG has supplied experienced observers to operate on a wide range of fishing vessels. These have included: demersal trawl, gill net and longline vessels; pelagic longline and purse seine vessels; pot vessels (crab and fish) and inshore reef fishing mothership-dory vessels.

2.9 Coastal Zone Management

Coastal zones contain some of the world's most intensively used environments. Increasing demand for coastal resources has led, in some cases, to degradation through loss of habitat and fisheries resources, reduced water quality and quantity, accelerated erosion and accumulation of pollution. This degradation has serious social and economic consequences for coastal communities.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is a management approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness of natural systems, and seeks to integrate efforts across the various levels of administration, policies, instruments and stakeholders to support sustainable use of the coastal zone.

ICZM not only aims to protect the natural functioning of coastal ecosystems, but also to improve the economic and social well-being of coastal zone communities. In the coastal zone, these environmental and socioeconomic goals are intrinsically interconnected. ICZM can be applied in many of the world's coastal areas which face problems of deterioration of their environmental, socio-economic and cultural resources and competition for space by the fishing, shipping, agriculture and tourism industries, amongst others.

MRAG has a long and successful track record in ICZM. Projects have included provision of expertise in planning for protected area management, promoting institutional support for ICZM and supporting community based fisheries and flood plain management. ICZM projects have been conducted on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Environment Facility (GEF), UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

2.10 Maritime Law and Governance

Strong, stable and resilient legal and institutional arrangements are an important factor

underpinning effective fisheries and environmental management arrangements. MRAG staff and expert associates have a long history in the development and practical implementation of national and international fisheries and environmental law including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and various international fisheries and maritime conventions.

In addition, through over 400 projects in more than 60 countries, MRAG has built up considerable capacity in institutional analysis of fisheries and other natural resource governance arrangements.

MRAG's services include providing counsel in the development of national fisheries arrangements, assisting with the practical implementation of international maritime laws and conventions, and providing independent reviews of institutional performance and governance arrangements.

2.11 Marine Stewardship Council Certification and Traceability

MRAG Asia Pacific's sister company MRAG Americas is approved to conduct both third party sustainable Fishery Certifications and Chain of Custody Certifications in accordance with MSC standards.

Sustainable fisheries assessments are carried out in accordance with MSC's Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing. These Principles and Criteria are the guidelines against which client fisheries are rated. A client fishery must meet or exceed the minimum standards for 1) stock assessment and stock status, 2) ecosystem impacts, and 3) fishery management system to receive certification.

Chain of Custody Certifications are conducted under the MSC standard and ensures that products bearing the MSC logo were sourced from a sustainably certified fishery.

MRAG also provides independent audits of supply chain traceability from ocean to plate.

2.12 Information Technology and GIS

The MRAG network has developed considerable expertise in data and information management through the design and implementation of numerous information systems for fisheries and environmental management. Indeed, information technology underpins so much of our work that a specific business unit has been created – MRAG IT - to handle the IT needs of each project. The IT services provided can be classified into five main classifications:

- Fisheries Information Management Systems;
- Stock Assessment Software Development;
- Data Analysis and Modelling;
- IT Training;
- Vessel Monitoring Systems and Communications.

3. Our Clients

The MRAG group has worked worldwide for more than two decades, accumulating experience in more than 60 countries. We have worked in both developed and developing nations for a diverse range of clients including national governments, multi-lateral organisations, private companies and associations, and non-government organisations. Our clients have included:

- Asian Development Bank
- Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
- United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation
- United Nations Development Programme
- Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- Marine Stewardship Council
- European Commission
- Royal Government of Cambodia
- National Fisheries Authority, PNG
- US National Marine Fisheries Service
- UK Government Department for International Development (DFID)
- Private companies and industry associations
- Non-government organisations

4. Further Information

For further information about MRAG Asia Pacific or to discuss project or consulting opportunities, please contact us at:

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