



## News Release

For immediate release on 21 April 2021

### Marine Stewardship Council funds ocean projects to drive progress in sustainable fishing, including India's deep-sea shrimp fishery in Kerala

Grants totalling £650,000 have been awarded to fisheries improvements in 12 countries, including a grant to WWF-India to support the deep-sea shrimp fishery in Kerala, India progress towards MSC certification.

Twenty fisheries and research projects around the world, including the Keralan deep-sea shrimp fishery, will receive up to £60,000 each from the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) [Ocean Stewardship Fund](#) (OSF) - a fund dedicated to enabling and supporting sustainable fishing around the world.

The awards include grants to the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), [WWF India](#) as well as to fisheries in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia. Nearly a quarter of the funding has been awarded in support of fisheries in the Global South, including fisheries in Indonesia and India.

The Fund supports fisheries that are in the early stages of improving their management practices. A [grant of £44,310 has been awarded to WWF-India](#) in support of a [fishery improvement project](#) (FIP) for the [deep-sea shrimp fishery in Kerala, India](#). WWF-India, in collaboration with a number of partners in the region, aims to help the fishery towards MSC certification by 2025.

The fishery targets Arabian red shrimp, deep-sea shrimp and Indian nylon shrimp, operating off Kerala's coast mainly in Kollam Bank where around 80% of Kerala's deep-sea shrimp are caught. Most of the catch is exported to the EU and the US. Alongside sustainability, market access has been a key driving force for the fishery and supporting stakeholders to seek certification.

In 2019, the [Seafood Exporters Association of India](#) (SEAI) and the Forum for Deep-sea Shrimp Sustainability developed an action plan and initiated an MSC pre-assessment. This showed that improved research is vital to help the fishery managers understand the stock status of the shrimp and to inform the development of harvest strategies in order for the fishery to demonstrate its practices are sustainable.

WWF-India will work with industry, [government](#), fishers and NGO stakeholders to undertake a stock assessment and determine a reference point for sustainable fishing. Their Ocean Stewardship Fund grant will also help the fishery meet other requirements for certification, such as reducing bycatch and assessing local habitat and ecosystem impacts.

**Vinod Malayilethu, Team Leader of the WWF-India Marine Conservation Programme,** explains:

“As most fisheries resources are overexploited in India, bringing sustainability is the only way by which the resources can be conserved and protected for future generations. This funding will help enable us to implement the fishery improvement project activities for these species of shrimp which are of great commercial importance.”

**The Marine Stewardship Council’s Consultant in India, Dr Ranjit Suseelan,** said:

“The Seafood Exporters Association of India has prioritised the sustainability of fisheries with the foresight that good business relies on sustainable resources. Also, the Government of India has developed and commenced with the implementation of several policies and improvement tools to support resource conservation and sustainable harvesting in India.

The MSC Ocean Stewardship Fund grant awarded to WWF-India and the Keralan deep-sea shrimp fishery presents a stepping stone in the sustainability journey encouraged by SEAI and several other programs initiated by the Government of India. Such a positive step forward will help the local fishermen to sustain their livelihoods and the very resource they depend on.”

**Joint Director of Fisheries of the Keralan Government, Smitha Nair,** adds:

“The Department of Fisheries, Government of Kerala, pledged to manage the fishery resources of the Keralan coast in a sustainable manner without harming the livelihood of those who are dependent on it. We are certain that the Marine Stewardship Council’s Ocean Stewardship grant fund awarded will aid us in bringing forth our effort to manage the region’s resources sustainably.

Since 2019, the Ocean Stewardship Fund has awarded 35 grants totalling £1.3 million and the MSC hopes the impact of those projects will contribute to the delivery of the [UN Sustainable Development Goal 14](#), Life Below Water.

For more information about the Ocean Stewardship Fund, including previous grant awards, please visit: [www.msc.org/oceanstewardshipfund](http://www.msc.org/oceanstewardshipfund). Read more about the deep-sea shrimp fishery funded project [here](#).

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**Notes for editors:**

1. Please link to our webpages about the Ocean Stewardship Fund projects in your reporting using this link: [www.msc.org/ocean-stewardship-fund-impact-projects](http://www.msc.org/ocean-stewardship-fund-impact-projects)
2. All Ocean Stewardship Fund grants are subject to completion of necessary conditions provided with grant offers.

**The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)** is an international non-profit organisation which sets globally recognised, science-based standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability. The MSC ecolabel and certification program recognises and rewards sustainable fishing practices and is helping create a more sustainable seafood market. It is the only wild-capture fisheries certification and ecolabelling program that meets best practice requirements set by both the [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization \(UNFAO\)](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/020202001.htm) and [ISEAL](http://www.iseal.co.uk/), the global membership association for sustainability standards. For more information visit [msc.org](http://www.msc.org)