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Villagers Make Action Plan for Revival

Photo: AIT

Following the December 2004 tsunami that devastated much of Thailand's coastal life, USAID launched a two-year program to help revitalize some of the hardest hit areas. The five village clusters of Kampuan, in southern Ranong province, were selected to participate in the program, which fosters cooperation between development partners, communities, and government bodies and helps build consensus on the best way to revitalize coastal communities and livelihoods. Since the affected communities depend on coastal resources for food, business, and income, the program will also work to rehabilitate coastal habitats, support fish stock recovery, preserve biodiversity, and stimulate tourism.

Kampuan community members meet regularly to discuss individual project assessments, designs, plans, implementation, and management. Village leaders are focusing efforts on guiding future development decisions, livelihood options, and quality-of-life decisions. Village extension teams elected by their communities, are undergoing training to enhance their skills and effectiveness. Meanwhile, USAID is working to build consensus with appropriate government departments on a regional development plan that promotes diversified livelihoods, benefit sharing, and initiatives to promote culturally and environmentally responsible tourism.

To jump-start the revival, USAID sponsored cash-for-work projects and contributed to a revolving loan fund, managed by village communities. As a result, fishery businesses are getting back on their feet, and a diversified range of other businesses are starting to open up. It will be a long time before coastal communities rebound fully, but by helping to build consensus from everyone, USAID is ensuring that the recovery will be a strong and lasting one.

Villagers from the Kampuan village cluster in Thailand's southern Ranong province meet and discuss their action plan for reviving coastal livelihoods destroyed by the December 2004 tsunami.