CMFRI STI Hub Supports 84 Fisheries Micro-enterprises in Kerala

The Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) hub of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) facilitated the establishment of 84 micro-enterprises in eight districts of Kerala between 2022 and 2026. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) funded the initiative, which aims to diversify livelihoods in fisheries.

CMFRI and the STI initiative

CMFRI is an institute of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Established in 1947, it conducts research on marine fisheries and mariculture. Its headquarters are in Kochi, Kerala. The STI hub project was led by Dr Vipinkumar V.P., a Principal Scientist at CMFRI. The project directly benefited 469 people, including 220 women and six transpersons. Approximately 2,500 people are expected to benefit indirectly. Women and Scheduled Caste fisherfolk were among the groups specifically targeted for support.

Fisheries activities and skills training

The enterprises cover production, farming, processing and marketing activities in the fisheries sector. They include cage fish farming, pearl spot seed production, ornamental fish culture, integrated fish farming, mussel and oyster farming, and clam cultivation. Other activities include fisheries value addition, fish vending and dry fish production. CMFRI conducted 141 training programmes for beneficiaries. The training covered technical knowledge and business skills for establishing and managing the enterprises. The project's stated objective includes enabling women to work as producers, skilled service providers and business owners in the fisheries value chain.

Income and enterprise outcomes

Household incomes of beneficiaries increased by 30% to 35%. The 84 enterprises were established across eight Kerala districts over the 2022–2026 project period. The activities span aquaculture, capture-fishery-related services, processing and fish marketing. The project directly benefited 469 people and provided 141 training programmes for enterprise development.