

fish farming Science improves lives

The work of our country's scientists can be used by any of us to improve our lives.

The Department for Science and Technology says government projects include science to help people turn their skills and knowledge into small businesses or work which enables them to earn an income.

■ Train workers

Farm workers in the Western Cape have made the most of the 'Hands-on' aquaculture project. For this project, the Department of Science and Technology partnered with the University of Stellenbosch to train over 150 local wine farm workers to become fish farmers and businesspeople.

■ Trout farming

The new farmers operate from 13 small-scale trout farming projects. They use their new skills to run a small trout-farming business. By December 2005, they began to supply a company in Franschhoek processing trout into food.

To ensure that the project keeps growing, the Hands-on Fish Farmer Co-operative Limited was formed. It helps member farmers with start-up funding and business.

Another 12 fish farming projects should come into operation in 2006.

■ Low-cost

Projects like this help build skills of local people and create opportunities in low-cost technology to create jobs.



Richard Holden, Director: Science and Technology for Social Impact explains: "We continuously identify opportunities for the development of local communities to address poverty. In partnership with academic and research institutions and private business, we can help communities to gain the skills they need to make the most of these opportunities. The Department's funding covers the 'start-up' costs of each project. Once the project is up and running it is easier to attract investment."

■ Other projects

At Giyani in Limpopo, the Department has helped local people use their knowledge of indigenous plants.

The Hi-Hanyile Mosquito Repellent and Essential Oils Project, started by the DST in 2001 in

partnership with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), provides jobs to 67 locals. They have been trained to farm plants and to extract essential oils, using simple scientific processes. Through this project researchers from the Council worked with traditional healers in the area to develop effective mosquito-repellant from oils of an indigenous plant.

In 2005, the Department funded the building of a factory in Giyani where this oil could be used to make mosquito-repellant candles and local people were trained to operate the machinery.

The candles are being sold in South Africa and there are plans to market them internationally.

For information on how to contact the Department of Science and Technology contact: 1020.