

Tsunami Assessments

The tsunami hit 3 states in Malaysia: Kedah, Pulau Penang and Perak. The most damage occurred in Kedah State in terms of loss of lives and the livelihoods of local fishermen. But Penang, Malaysia's economic and touristic hub, was severely impacted too.

In January 2005, the Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute made an assessment of the economic impact of the tsunami.

Socio-economic and impact assessment

In August 2005, Wetlands International Malaysia did a survey to assess the damage to the environment and people's livelihoods. At the same time the organisation wanted to find out what the affected people think should change. It was apparent that the local situation was under control and had reverted to a near normal state of affairs. People were fishing in their new or repaired boats and the fish market was lively and busy again. It almost seemed as if nothing happened. But something had changed in people's minds.

Need for technical skills in replanting

The tsunami and its impact showed the fishermen and the coastal communities the importance of coastal protection, and the problems that can occur if the natural barriers are damaged or destroyed. Local fishermen's associations and community groups are now more involved than ever in rehabilitating their coastline. What they need are skills and knowledge about planting techniques and restoration work in mangroves and mudflats areas. So that they themselves can protect their homes from further natural disasters.

Working with the stakeholders

The Green Coast project in Malaysia is trying to stimulate these ideas by bringing the right people and organisations together. Wetlands International Malaysia acts as a mediator between the experts on rehabilitation and those communities that want to rehabilitate their coastline.