

SINCE 1982, prawns have been the number one foreign exchange earner regularly bringing in about \$40m-\$50m. In 1989, the prawn industry earned the country \$39.4m out of total foreign exchange earnings of \$101.1m.

Mozambique's fishing fleet is small, much of it inherited from Portuguese colonialists who fled the nation at independence in 1975. But joint venture and licensing agreements with Japanese, Soviet, South African and Spanish companies have proved remarkably successful in capitalising on the fishing resource of Mozambique.

Sound marketing strategies have been adopted in Europe (mostly Spain, Italy and France), Japan and South

FT. THE PRAWN INDUSTRY

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Rare success for the state

Africa. Pescom, a government owned company which has marketed much of Mozambique's prawn production, has proved one of the rare successes of state enterprise.

The prawn industry has been relatively insulated from the effects of the war although shortages of petroleum and power cuts have hurt the sector.

However, there are signs

that the shallow-water prawn resources may be over-exploited and stocks of deep water prawn, lobster and crab are unknown. Last year, the government again placed a ban on the fishing of prawns from December 1 to January 31 in order to allow stocks to recover and increase. The targeted prawn catch for this year has been fixed at 7,500 tons, slightly less than that set for

1990. The industry is also facing increased competition from farmed prawns in Asia.

Foreign investment is being encouraged in the fishing sector, particularly in areas other than prawn. Good resources of crab, lobster, scad, mackerel, anchovy, sardine and tuna are believed to exist. But sea bream, grouper, octopus, oyster, snapper and mussel resources, mostly in northern fishing zones, remain particularly under exploited.

Partnerships are being invited for Mozambique's two fish canneries in Beira and Maputo which remain under supplied with raw material and trying to develop export potential in crab, clams and other molluscs.

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