



SPADA: the Special Programme for Aquaculture Development in Africa

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The 27th Session of COFI, recognizing the growing importance of aquaculture in the Africa Region (see Box 1) as well as the region's under-utilized aquaculture resources, established SPADA: the Special Programme for Aquaculture Development in Africa. SPADA was further supported by participants in the 2007 High-Level Event on Aquaculture during the 34th FAO Conference. In conjunction with the NEPAD Action Plan for the Development of African Fisheries and Aquaculture, the programme's goal is to improve economic and rural development by enhancing fish supply and distribution as well as providing good human nutrition through increased aquacultural production; this goal achieved by promoting sustainable aqua-businesses at national level including the necessary public and private support services.

SPADA's Aims

The Programme aims to:

1. increase aquacultural production in the Region by at least 200 percent over the next decade;
2. assist two-thirds of countries in the Africa region in elaborating and implementing national aquaculture development strategies with accompanying aquaculture plans, legislation and regulations;
3. implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) as they relate to aquaculture as well as instituting monitoring and evaluation methods that ensure social and environmental soundness;
4. strengthen the African Aquaculture Network [ANAF] to facilitate information exchange, provide technical assistance, co-ordinate education and research and provide basic support to the sector while employing the latest information technology including communications technology to facilitate networking and information exchange; and
5. facilitate access to inputs (e.g., feed, seed, capital, land, water) by investors while promoting intra-regional trade and markets for aquatic products.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

SPADA, as a new and innovative programme, is still in the formative stages. It is intended to cover all African countries and be directly linked to NEPAD through its Action Plan. SPADA activities would take place at national, sub-regional and regional levels. At national level, the programme would work with public and private institutions, service providers, NGOs/CSOs and the private sector to establish sustainable and responsible aqua-businesses which would, in turn, increase employment, fish supply and investment opportunities. At sub-regional level, SPADA would work with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to develop protocols for managing shared resources, trans-boundary movement of aquatic products as well as intra-regional trade and markets. At regional level, the programme would assist NEPAD in implementing its Action Plan including assistance to the nascent ANAF as well as relevant aquaculture bodies including the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA).

PROGRAMME ARENAS

SPADA is planned to be active in seven different but interrelated programme arenas, namely:

(i) Strengthening regional, sub-regional and national institutions

The programme will provide capacity building and advise as to how to efficiently structure aquaculture institutions at all levels as well as provide training on a broad spectrum of aquaculture issues including aqua-business management, production, facilities development, etc.

(ii) Networking and outreach

The programme will strengthen ANAF and build effective links to extension and outreach activities at all levels. These activities will include publicising information concerning opportunities in aqua-business to encourage investment in the sub-sector.

(iii) Capital and input supply

The programme will assist in ensuring access by investors to critical inputs including, among others, capital, feed and seed. This would include certification programmes for the suppliers of such inputs as feed and seed. As the aquaculture sub-sector expands, access to essential land and water issues will become increasingly competitive.

(iv) Processing and marketing

The programme will provide guidance as to options for processing and marketing including establishing quality control procedures.

(v) Research and education

The programme will co-ordinate and harmonise research and education in the region to identify comparative advantages of the different concerned institutions, support regional research and educational activities, match needs with providers and generally increase the overall efficacy of these operations.

(vi) Social, economic and environmental soundness

The programme will establish base factors that are conducive for sustainable aqua-businesses as well as determine elements to be considered for pre-investment impact assessments and post-investment monitoring.

(vii) Monitoring and evaluation

The programme will implement regional and national monitoring and evaluation activities including improved and more precise statistical reporting mechanisms.



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SPADA: INVESTING IN AQUACULTURE

The small investor can and should be the motor for development of sustainable and profitable national aquaculture programmes. Small and medium enterprise aqua-businesses will benefit from the region's comparative advantages of relatively inexpensive and available land, labour and water. These enterprises, concentrated in high potential zones with optimal bio-physical and socio-economic resources, will go a long way to fill the region's growing supply gap for aquatic products. However, this process requires a catalyst; this catalyst is SPADA. SPADA, as an integrated and multi-dimensional programme with a variety of national, regional and international partners including NEPAD and ANAF, will provide the needed support to thousands of small investors across the region, helping them develop profitable aqua-businesses, increasing aquaculture's contribution to local markets.

Box 1

Aquaculture: a new investment for Africa's future. Africa has long been that region of the world with the lowest aquacultural production inspite of significant under-utilized resources. However, over the past several years there has been a major change in the status of the region's aquaculture sub-sector. This positive change has been catalyzed by increasing investor confidence in aquacultural enterprises. This growing confidence has been further strengthened by new approaches to the development of the sub-sector combined with the growing use of improved and appropriate technologies such as cage and tank culture as well as access to better inputs including feed and seed. Overarching these recent advances has been a shift in focus to farmer-led action and profitable aqua-businesses as the cornerstones of the sub-sector. SPADA is an umbrella programme that will amplify the growing momentum by developing effective economies of scale for regional and sub-regional action while ensuring efficient flow of information and technology exchange across the region.



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Visit of former FAO staff

Mr Michael New, OBE, a former staff with the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and founder of Aquaculture without Frontiers (www.aquaculturewithoutfrontiers.org), an independent non-profit organisation that promotes and supports responsible and sustainable aquaculture in developing countries, recently paid a courtesy visit to FAO. Mr New, author of the FAO Fisheries Technical Paper No. 428 on "Farming freshwater prawns: a manual for the culture of the giant river prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*)", which has been just released also in Arabic, is seen in the FAO premises together with Mr Valerio Crespi (left) and Mr Alessandro Lovatelli (right), Aquaculture Management and Conservation Service (FIMA).

