



A. LOVATELLI, FAO

*Fish Farming Centre – Fish hatchery building and view from the inside*

## Updates on the Aquaculture Project in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Felix G. Ayson<sup>1</sup> and Alessandro Lovatelli<sup>2</sup>**

FAO Chief Technical Adviser<sup>1</sup>  
 UTFN/SAU/017/SAU, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
 Felix.Ayson@fao.org  
 Aquaculture Management and Conservation Service (FIMA)<sup>2</sup>  
 Fisheries and Aquaculture Department  
 Rome, Italy  
 Alessandro.Lovatelli@fao.org

The fisheries and aquaculture component of the latest 5-year Trust Fund Project between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which is titled “Support to the Fish Farming Center in Jeddah” (Project Symbol UTFN/SAU/017/SAU) had its inception workshop in January last year. This short article describes what has been done in 2008 and the activities planned for 2009.

The main thrust of the project is capacity building for the national research staff, to better equipped them to perform their main function of conducting scientific aquaculture research. The Fish Farming Centre (FFC) is the only aquaculture research centre in the Kingdom which is tasked to generate science-based sustainable aquaculture technologies appropriate for the country. The capacity building focus of the project is assisting resident researchers to fully appreciate

the process of scientific research from conceptualizing a problem, writing the proposal, conducting the research itself, gathering and interpreting data, and writing up the results and findings.

Specific training courses designed to answer specific needs in the Centre were also programmed and implemented. In May-June 2008, one researcher of the FFC attended the International Training Course on Marine Fish Hatchery Operations and Management organized by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), Aquaculture Department in Iloilo (Philippines) to learn new techniques on breeding and larval rearing of marine fish species such as groupers, Asian seabass and siganids, the same group of marine fish that the Centre is working on. In October 2008, two additional researchers attended a 1-month training courses on Fish Health Management and Culture of Natural Food Organisms, respectively, organized by the same

organization in the Philippines. More training courses for the staff are planned for 2009. Furthermore, a fish health expert will be visiting the Centre this January to initiate the establishment of a PCR-based disease diagnosis lab. This will definitely improve the diagnostic capability of the Centre. During the first semester of this year, two aquaculture experts on cage aquaculture and environmental monitoring will also be visiting the Centre in Jeddah for capacity building on marine cage culture technology and environmental monitoring. It will be a very busy year ahead for the Centre and its staff.



F. G. AYSON, FAO

*Fish health training – Preparing samples for virus detection using PCR*