

## **FAO supports the Mauritian Government with sustainable aquaculture development through the promotion of small-scale cage culture**

Current overexploitation of the lagoon resources has led to reduced catches in the inshore fisheries in Mauritius. This issue is being tackled by the Fishermen Investment Trust (FIT) with the technical and financial support from the EU-funded SmartFish Project managed by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and co-implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

A pilot project supporting an alternative income option for fisher folks through the promotion of cage culture at two pre-identified locations, namely at Poste de Flacq and at Quatre soeurs, has been launched. The ultimate objective of the project is to gradually convert select fisher folk to become fish farmers through diversification of opportunities such as fish cage culture at sea. The main species to be cultured will be the “Cordonnier” which has given good results in cage culture.

An international marine fish cage culture expert from FAO will be stationed in Mauritius from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> July to technically support FIT on the implantation of the project, providing guidance on cage design and construction and delivering practical trainings for two selected cooperatives. In addition an introductory seminar will be held, at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC), on the management of cage culture on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July. The event will be opened by the Minister of Fisheries of the Republic of Mauritius.

The AFRC will be the strategic partner of FIT for the project implementation providing fish juveniles and technical assistance free-of-charge for the first cycle to all new fish farmers. In collaboration with FIT, the AFRC will also monitor the various cage cultures around the island and assist the new fish farmers in obtaining the maximum benefit from the new business.