Intensifying Smallholder Fish Farming Systems In West And central Africa

The growing demand for fish presents opportunities for intensive smallholder production for increased income of producers in rural areas of West and Central Africa.

Fish farming, also known as aquaculture, as an industry is relatively new in West and Central, having been introduced in the 1960s as a way of improving availability of fish protein for rural households and for income generation. Decreasing availability of fish from wild harvests as a result of large-scale captures of fish justifies the need for intensifying smallholder aquaculture production. This presents some interesting perspectives relative to poverty reduction strategies in West and Central Africa. In order to take a full advantage of the contributions of fish farming in poverty reduction, technology uptake processes aimed at promoting productivity need to be cost-effective, and easily adaptable.

This CAADP-compliant project is promoting recent innovations aimed at enhancing fish farming and productivity in rural communities. It is directly addressing the challenges related to access to requisite sustainable production techniques and information for production management. Fish ponds construction and management; breeds and spawning; processing, storage and marketing information are all very important drivers for sustaining fish production from aquaculture for poverty reduction.

Main Beneficiaries
Smallholder fish farmers will benefit from improved management techniques for enhanced production and distribution of the products. Rural communities in which fish farms are located will benefit from a steady supply of fish protein. Enhanced and user-friendly techniques will encourage growth in the fish farming and trading sub-sector.

Main Regional Benefits
New knowledge on fish farming techniques generated from this project will be will be out-scaled to countries of the sub-region. Increased fish farming will reduce pressure on common regionally shared marine fisheries.

Partners
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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| **1** Knowledge Base | • Local producer groups and marketing opportunities identified.  
• Systemic constraints and opportunities (socio-economic, value chain, gender, technology, etc.) in the intensification of fish farming by local communities identified.  
• Socio-technical practices used by producers documented.  
• Projected contributions of fish farming to rural economies and livelihoods documented. | **Outcome 1** Increased contribution of fish farms to rural dwellers’ incomes  
**Outcome 2** Increased availability and accessibility of knowledge for intensive production. | Increased role of fish in the supply of dietary protein in rural communities. |
| **2** Technologies & Innovations | • Improved fish races with high potentials for rapid fingerlings generation and development proposed  
• Fish species best suited for intensification in specific regions proposed.  
• Improved fish feeding ratios proposed  
• Improved water regimes for intensive fish production proposed  
• Optimal fish production in ambient conditions proposed.  
• Improved cultural techniques proposed. | **Outcome 3** Improved and sustained fish farms’ productivity | Increased role of fish farming in employment creation.  
Improved livelihoods of both producers and consumers of fish products. |
| **3** Capacity Strengthening | • Capacity strengthening needs of fish farmers for production intensification identified.  
• Appropriate tailor-made producer advisory manual developed.  
• Brochures, manuals, farmers’ exchange visits, etc. which facilitate peer exchange of production information on the fish farming value chain developed.  
• Capacity of participating institutions to use integrated agricultural research for development methods (including M+E softwares) strengthened. | **Outcome 4** Best practices in intensive fish production assimilated  
**Outcome 5** Capacity of producers, fish merchants and other actors to optimize the fish farming value chain enhanced | |

For more information  
Please contact: Dr. Hamade Kagoné  
Email: hamade.kagone@coraf.org  
www.coraf.org

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