

The Commercial Aquaculture Producers of Africa form an association – CAPA

Following a meeting in Jinja (Uganda) last year CAPA, the Commercial Aquaculture Producers of Africa, was formed as the representative body for leading freshwater fish farmers on the continent. CAPA and its members will set the standard for sustainable aquaculture in the freshwaters of Africa.

The founding members of the association are Dominion Farms (Kenya), Lake Harvest (Zimbabwe), Maldeco (Malawi) and SON Fish Farms (Uganda). Each company has elected a representative to the CAPA Board of Directors. For the next two years the CAPA secretariat will be managed by Anton Immink at the Institute of Aquaculture, University of Stirling. The development of CAPA is being supported by CDE (Centre for the Development of Enterprise) as one of their initiatives to support commercial aquaculture development in Africa.

CAPA will provide leadership in the development of commercial freshwater aquaculture in Africa; setting standards for world class fish farming incorporating the best technologies, wholesome feed formulations and the highest corporate and social responsibilities ensuring sustainable farms for generations to come. CAPA will open doors by branding the highest quality products

and facilitating access to the best markets. As the platform for rolling out aquaculture development across Africa, CAPA will assist in bringing employment, food security and foreign currency earning potential. CAPA provides a voice and information for the sector to guide the decision making of regional bodies helping to balance the needs of all stakeholders.

It is recognised by FAO, NEPAD and others that commercial aquaculture in Africa needs to take the lead in order to facilitate the long term growth of the sector in support of national and international development objectives. Aquaculture in Africa is (finally) in a position where it can capitalise on the vast pristine, fresh water bodies, land availability and extensive crop farming of Africa in order to secure viable returns for the continent. One of the key elements that sets African production above all other is the use of native fish species. Catfish production uses local species and Africa is the home of tilapia and other cichlid fishes currently providing the bulk of freshwater aquaculture production in Africa. Along with technical improvements, increased market opportunities are central to development and CAPA will act to strengthen the marketing of Africa aquaculture products.



Some of the early tasks of CAPA will include: the establishment of an active website information point (www.capafish.org); the development of production, marketing and environmental management guidelines for distribution to members and relevant stakeholders; assessments of and reporting on the carbon footprint of commercial aquaculture in Africa; inputs into international standards supporting trade of sustainable African aquaculture products; promoting CAPA to potential members; and supporting local aquaculture development through on-farm training. CAPA will attempt to source external funding for these, and other, activities to ensure the continued sustainable development of the sector.

PMI2- A new source of support for international higher education collaboration in aquaculture

The Prime Ministers Initiative (PMI2) is a five year strategy that aims to “secure the UK’s position as a leader in international education and sustain the managed growth of UK international education delivered both in the UK and overseas”¹.

The fund is managed by the British Council and follows on from a similar earlier initiative (PMI1). Launched in April 2006, it aims to strengthen both the quality and value of education but also contribute globally and build strong partnerships with key institutions overseas. Of the four strands that the Initiative is supporting the Institute developed two separate proposals within the research cooperation scheme. Both of these were funded after a highly competitive process of peer review. The main purpose of this programme is to develop the foundations of longer term quality cooperation between the Institute and key partners in priority countries. The projects are small (<£40,000

over two years) but are designed to pump-prime cooperation around tangible and mutually agreed research activities that have potential for longer term collaboration².

The development of both proposals, as is so often the case, developed through attempts to support post-graduate students seeking to fund field work. Tina Raison who has recently registered as a PhD student had developed an interest in sea cucumbers and had independently developed contacts with Professor Boonsirm Withyachumnarnkul at the Center of Excellence for Shrimp Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (CENTEX Shrimp³), Mahidol University, Bangkok. She took the lead in developing the proposal around the potential role of these valued and overexploited holothurians in polycultures with shrimp.

In Vietnam the explosive growth of the river catfish, *Pangasius*, production is the focus

of our collaboration with the Dr Nguyen Thanh Phuong, Dean of the College of Aquaculture and Fisheries⁴. This project will support exchanges between geneticists (Ha Phuoc Hung and David Penman) in both institutions and field work by Ben Belton and Le Xuan Sinh aiming to better understand the hatchery/nursery sector.

Both collaborations are based on the excellent track records of both institutions, in terms of their research leadership and output; both have had major impacts of the development of the shrimp and *Pangasius* sectors in Thailand and Vietnam respectively.

¹<http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi-overview.htm>

²<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-pmi2-he-funding-opportunities.htm>

³<http://www.biotec.or.th/centex/centex.htm>

⁴<http://www.ctu.edu.vn/colleges/aquaculture/eng-version>